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AFRICA

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# **Reflection Paper**

## **Introduction**

My name is Mncedisi Mncwabe, I studied BSc (Hons) Statistical sciences with specialization in Data sciences at the University of the Western Cape. I pursued this course because I have always been passionate about mathematical sciences and I enjoy being challenged by problems that require critical thinking and facts to develop solutions.

I am currently working as a Data Analyst Graduate in MultiChoice's Centre of Information and Insights (CII) division. My role is to collaborate with business functions, such as HR and Finance, to analyse information and data so that our leaders are well informed and can make important business decisions.

I have only been with the company for five short months but this programme has already given me insight into MultiChoice and how the business operates. In addition, workplace exposure across different departments, and developing different technical skills which will be extremely valuable as I refine my career path in a world of evolving technology. I aim to work hard to secure a position in the Business Advisory or Data Science/Analytics fields at MultiChoice where I can continue to grow, both personally and professionally. Ultimately, I hope to get to a managerial level within the company and the MultiChoice Graduate programme is taking me one step closer to realising this goal.

## **Key Learnings**

The use of mental and decision-making models has changed the way I view and approach situations. As an introvert who's constantly working towards being well-informed in the modern technology space, I have learned to understand and see the world and people from a different perspective and not only from what I do and pay attention to. I resonate with this because I have always been unconsciously viewing the world more from a technology perspective and less from other fields or people's perspectives. This is also because I have always preferred to live on my own inner world and paid less attention to the outside world.

I have realized that in my life I haven't been following any steps towards making a decision. Hence, that is why the decision-making model is one of my key learnings. I've never realized that I've been skipping the important steps, such as gathering information and weighing evidence, rather I have been rushing to decisions without identifying alternatives. There was a time, in my first year of university studies, when I had to decide between buying textbooks and a laptop. The total cost of the textbooks was equivalent to that of a laptop. I decided to buy textbooks, of which I later discovered that I could've bought a laptop and freely download all the textbooks. I am now confident that going forward I will be able to make cautious and thoughtful decisions through collecting relevant information and identifying alternatives.

The rich picture from systems thinking also came out as one of the models that stood out for me. The use of a rich picture is a good tool to unpack the context and issues on a complex problem (Naidoo, 2020). I resonate with this model because I am a person who thinks through visual processing, in order to understand situations. This also enables me to formulate proper and relevant solutions to situations. Even though I am a person who thinks in pictures, I haven't taken it to a point that I draw the entire situation on paper. Therefore, I have noted the importance and efficiency of a rich picture in illustrating a complex situation.

I'd like to conclude my key learnings from the first block by discussing my learnings about personal mastery. Personal Mastery is the expression used to describe the discipline of personal growth and learning (Padarath, 2020). This concept stood out for me because it highlights something that I find very important, continuous growth and learning about one's self, especially for someone like myself who seeks to develop leadership capabilities. I have also noted that personal mastery doesn't only involve the knowledge of one's self, but it can also include the knowledge of others. I believe that if a leader knows what motivates themselves, they can also work on what motivates others.

## **Practical Work/Life Examples**

In my second year of university, there was a time when I had to decide between renting an apartment far from campus for a cheaper cost and one closer to campus for an expensive cost. Instead of gathering more information about both apartments, I made a rushed decision and took the one closer to campus. After signing a contract, I later discovered that there were university shuttles transporting students to and from the other apartment. I could've used this model to gather more information and choose from alternatives, and be able to save money while I also get to campus on time through shuttles. In future, I will be able to change this behaviour towards similar or other situations, as I have learnt the efficiency of this model.

After the first block, I have been able to apply what I've learnt from the rich picture model on some part of the data migration project that I and the team are working on. I have been able to assist in creating a data stream methodology that also involves creating a stakeholder map to illustrate all the stakeholders involved in making the project successful. This project involves moving data from one system to another, this is complex because the data must have no discrepancies when it gets to a new system. Therefore, it requires proper planning and consultations with different data and system owners.

The mental model could have assisted me in situations where I wasn't aware of my thinking and inquiring into others' thinking. I was once surprised when one of my friends, who's also in analytics field, was telling me about an analytics tool that he uses in his business. I was a bit shocked how he could still be using such a tool when there are better tools to do the work because it is a bit outdated. He told me it was because he couldn't afford the new tools, and that the old one was still satisfying and doing the work for him. This showed me that I didn't consider his perspective on the tool and I simply expected him to be using the newer tools. Hence, the mental model has shown me the importance of understanding the people around me and their perspectives.

## **Personal Commitment**

In my team we collaborate with different business functions, such as HR and Finance. We do the analysis and schedule meetings to present the findings to these functions. The meetings are usually scheduled and run by my mentor. I usually take notes of what is discussed and should be noted from those meetings. I have gotten comfortable with just listening and taking notes from meetings. I aim to extend myself beyond this comfort zone and request my mentor to give me an opportunity to run a meeting and be the one presenting the insights to the business functions.

This will challenge my mental model because not only will it extend me beyond my comfort zone, but it will also help me develop presentation skills. I believe it will help me interact more with business functions, and not only do the analysis and hand it over to my mentor to present the insights. In this way, I will also be able to be at the forefront and learn to get more comfortable around the people from these functions.

## **Conclusion**

I have realized the positions and spaces that I want to see myself in, such as the managerial levels, will require my better developed self. This includes developing soft skills, technical skills, leadership capabilities, better alignment with the company behaviours, such as accountability, mastering myself and extending myself beyond my comfort zone. I believe these are the fundamental qualities that will enable me to thrive as refine my career path. They are not only limited to my career development but will serve as a personal development too.

I also believe developing these qualities form part of the necessary steps towards achieving the positions that I would like to see myself occupying, especially leadership positions. This will require me to fully commit to learning these qualities in order to maximize my potential. I believe mastering these qualities will also allow me to better understand the outside world and just the people around me.

## Bibliography

Naidoo, K. (2020). *Systems Thinking*.

Padarath, R. (2020). *Personal Mastery*.

**Multichoice Work Readiness Programme - Block 1**

Name	
Company	
Assessment Title	
Date	
Facilitator	

**Plagiarism Declaration**

I declare that this coursework is entirely my own work and does not include any plagiarized material. All sources that were consulted to compile this document have been referenced appropriately.

Full name: MNCEDISI M

Signature: 

Date: 11/07/20