

# **ENGR303 Gender & Engineering: Assignment 5**

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## **Final Paper: Reflections on the course Gender and Engineering**

### **Introduction**

Throughout the course ENGR303 Gender & Engineering, I have gained a deeper understanding of the nuanced interactions between gender dynamics and professional environments, particularly in engineering fields. This course has offered invaluable insights into addressing and mitigating gender biases and fostering inclusivity through strategic communication and team management approaches. Reflecting on various scenarios discussed during the course, I will integrate these lessons into both my professional conduct and personal interactions.

### **Personal Scenario Analysis (Topic A2)**

During my tenure as a Product Manager, I encountered a significant challenge that involved managing team dynamics between individuals with differing work styles — relational and individualistic. Sarah, a team member with a relational approach, thrived in collaborative settings, while David, who favored individualistic work, preferred autonomy. This disparity led to tensions that not only impacted team harmony but also productivity.

From the course, I learned the importance of recognizing and valuing these diverse work styles. Effective management involves creating environments where both styles can coexist and complement each other, thus harnessing a broader range of insights and capabilities.

### **Integration of Course Learnings**

One pivotal aspect of the course was understanding the impact of implicit gender biases in workplace interactions and decision-making processes. For instance, relational styles, often associated with femininity, may be undervalued in traditionally male-dominated fields like engineering, where individualistic, task-focused traits are predominant.

The course emphasized the importance of empathy, adaptability, and explicit communication in leadership. Applying these principles, I proposed structured team meetings and clear communication channels in my scenario, ensuring that all team members, regardless of their

preferred work style, felt acknowledged and valued. This approach not only resolved the immediate conflict but also enhanced overall team productivity and morale.

### **Reflective Insights and Broader Implications**

Reflecting on the discussions and applying the theoretical concepts to real-world situations helped me understand the underlying dynamics in my professional interactions. For instance, I realized that by not acknowledging the contributions of team members explicitly, leaders could inadvertently perpetuate feelings of undervaluation, particularly for those whose contributions might not be as immediately visible.

This realization has profound implications for my future leadership style. I am now more aware of the need to foster an environment where diverse contributions are recognized and celebrated, promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect. This not only applies to gender but also to the broader spectrum of diversity within teams, including cultural, experiential, and cognitive diversity.

### **Greatest Learning from the Course (Topic B)**

#### **Insight and Integration**

The most profound learning from the course was the significance of "adopt and adapt" in managing diverse teams. This concept has reshaped my approach to leadership, making me more aware of the intrinsic biases and the unique strengths that different individuals bring to the table. By adopting different competencies within the team and adapting my approach to leadership, I have been able to foster a more innovative and supportive work environment.

I plan to continuously integrate these learnings into my professional life by facilitating workshops and training sessions on gender sensitivity and inclusive communication strategies. This proactive approach not only aids in personal growth but also enhances the collective efficiency and creativity of my team.

### **Remaining Questions and Desired Additions to the Course (Topic C)**

#### **Questions and Curiosities**

Post-course, I am left with questions about how to effectively scale these individual and team insights across larger organizations, particularly in culturally diverse settings. Additionally, I am curious about more advanced strategies for dealing with resistance to gender equity initiatives within traditional engineering environments.

## **Desired Course Enhancements**

I would appreciate more content on practical applications of gender theories in global contexts, as well as strategies for negotiating and advocating for gender equity in highly resistant environments. Coaching on these topics would be beneficial, providing more tools to handle complex scenarios involving gender and cultural differences.

## **Conclusion and Future Directions**

The course has instilled in me a responsibility to act as a catalyst for change, promoting gender intelligence and inclusivity in all professional engagements. By implementing the lessons learned, I aim to create teams that are not only effective in their tasks but are also representative of equitable and supportive work environments.

As I move forward in my career, I am committed to continuing my education on these topics, engaging with new research, and applying these insights to create a more inclusive engineering field. The journey towards greater inclusivity and equity is ongoing, and I am dedicated to contributing to this evolution both within my immediate professional sphere and in broader community engagements.

This course has been transformative, equipping me with the tools to not only navigate but also shape workplace dynamics for the better. It has deepened my understanding of how integral gender and communication styles are to effective teamwork and leadership.