**Network Security – Individual Reflective Piece**

**Abstract**

During this module, we were tested on the various aspects of network security, culminating in an executive summary of security issues found for a website. Almalag (2022) states that Kolb’s experiential learning theory will help me understand my learning process and, as such, will be used as a framework for this reflective piece.

**I. Concrete Experiences**

The first stage of the reflective cycle is to focus on the concrete experience. One outcome of this module was identifying security threats in network systems and determining appropriate methodologies and tools to solve them. We also had to critically appraise computer programs and produce solutions to manage and audit security issues. Our understanding was demonstrated by creating a security assessment of a given website. I felt this was good practice for work within a professional setting.

As shown through collaborative discussions, we had to synthesise information from multiple sources to analyse security breaches and issues. The topics included the challenges a bricks-and-mortar SME may face with digital transformation and the impact of security logging. These discussions showcased our ability to articulate legal, social, and ethical issues IT professionals face.

There were various seminars to attend, which, due to work constraints, I could not attend. This was frustrating because I feel time with the tutor and engaging with peers is vital for development. Fortunately, the seminars were recorded, therefore, I was not missing out on learning. I attempted to engage with my peers for the final seminar, explaining why I could not attend and providing the basis for a presentation; however, I received little response from them.

**II. Reflective Observations**

The next stage of the learning cycle is to reflect on the experiences. Looking back, the aspect I enjoyed most was the collaborative discussions. These discussions offer an opportunity to learn differing viewpoints and engage more deeply with the source material (Rodger, 2020), enhancing understanding of the topic. Furthermore, collaborative working skills are improved by providing peer feedback. Reflecting on this, I should have spent more time in this area.

I was pleased with the improvement in my academic writing. Although I have not seen the marking yet, I noticed a considerable difference in the structure and clarity of my writing. My writing has become more refined and concise, which will lend credibility to my work in a professional context.

**III. Abstract Conceptualisation**

From the reflection, I can conclude why some areas went well, and others did not. While I enjoyed the collaborative discussions and feel they are a vital learning method for improving understanding, I thought I could have spent more time on them. There was considerably less effort spent on these discussions compared to those of the previous module. This is because, in the last module, they were summatively assessed, compared to formative in this module.

To gain a place in this course, I had to prove that I had the required work experience in the field because I had no degree. This is, therefore, my first attempt at this level of academic writing. The increased practice in writing discussion posts and assessments is why my academic writing has improved.

I mentioned how I should have better balanced my work life and time with the course. Being in the military, it is hard to justify to the chain of command why I need time away from work to complete a course I have decided to undertake on my terms. However, it indicates a need to improve my time management. There were many quiet periods I should have taken advantage of to either finish reading or rewrite areas of my assignments.

**IV. Active Experimentation**

This leads to a personal development plan in the active experimentation stage. For future modules, I need to organise my time more efficiently. This prevented me from attending seminars and would have allowed me to gain a higher grade in the first assessment. A discussion with my chain of command to enable me to undertake more aspects of this course will also be beneficial. Furthermore, many of my senior colleagues have completed higher learning courses and should be able to offer guidance when needed.

There are still areas in which I can improve my academic writing. Criticality is a significant aspect of this course. Therefore, more analysis and proofreading, asking myself how to deepen the discussion rather than provide superficial arguments, will help me attain higher grades. This also ties in with my point regarding time management, enabling me to carry out this analysis in my work.

I also need to engage more with the learning materials and my peers. Not being assessed for a piece of writing is not a credible reason not to fully engage. I miss out on vital opportunities to enhance and improve my understanding by not fully engaging. Furthermore, later in the course, there is an emphasis on collaborative working. While I did initiate the conversation and work, if our syndicate does not fully cooperate, there will be a noticeable decline in the quality of our assignments. Teamwork is also a vital skill in a professional setting (Worklife, 2024).

**References**

* Almalag, H. M. et al. (2022) Evaluation of a Multidisciplinary Extracurricular Event Using Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of multidisciplinary healthcare* 152957–2967. Available from: <https://www.dovepress.com/article/download/80610> [Accessed 08 September 2024].
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* Worklife. (2024) The importance of teamwork (as proven by science). Available from: <https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/the-importance-of-teamwork> [Accessed 09 September 2024].