Unit 10 Reflection

What an oddly timed unit! Students must submit a research proposal at the end of this unit and will likely not have research writing experience before taking this module. Yet students are expected to understand and grasp how to present research findings correctly. I believe this unit is better suited earlier within this module to give students a foundation to prepare them along their research journey.

I also submitted my statistical worksheets for formative feedback to better understand if my grasp of statistics is on the right track. Honestly, I find statistics quite interesting in how it aids in uncovering new knowledge and data insights. But, without a formal background in statistics, I think it is hard to appreciate the beauty in its use.

This week I was at my mental and emotional wits' end about preparing a research proposal because everything question I asked a researcher had already investigated. Every question I raised seemed like it would not raise any quantifiable data. Would there be enough information to fill 500 pages required for the final project? Would the topic be unique enough? What if I only reach 20 pages? So, I was turned inside out in my thoughts and emotions. I found no strength or guidance in finding something *unique, never-been-done-before*. I searched YouTube channels; I looked online for advice; I listened to graduation coaches. These avenues helped to fill in a few gaps, but they did not resolve the unease about the inherited inability to locate a unique topic for research.

One statement I encountered during this dark time that I experienced is true: "*do not assume your topic has not been researched before".* How true this is! I saw it repeatedly when locating literature and failing to proceed because someone had already addressed the topic or question. The following feedback I encountered was selecting a topic that interests you, asking questions, and finding relevant literature. How often would I ask what I felt were unique questions only to be let down every time because it is already tackled! Alas! In the back of my mind, there rang out the condemnation about "Data!", "It must be quantifiable!", "It must be numerical!". When I found what I felt was a research gap, the next mental contention was that I assumed there was little hope of generating decent data or that the data would be too vague.

With the deadline fast approaching, I could no longer mess around with changing my research proposal topic for the fourth time. So, I resorted to career experience: better to submit *something* rather than nothing. And my reasoning was this*: at least with something, you can still get a mark, which is much better than a "0".* This thought was my only continuing

strength, a commitment to myself alone. Ironically, despite the pain associated with locating a gap, I found the pleasant part of the proposal was recoding it up in PowerPoint and typing up a transcript. I found a nice feedback loop between voice record, playback, transcript, make revisions, and record again. Overall, I am pleased with how my presentation turned out (regardless of whatever awarded grade). I learned a few things (thanks to researchers on YouTube) on *how to support* the content on a slide. I could have delivered a better proposal. However, typing up content on Sunday and Monday with no time to spare meant that I must make do with what I had created to that point. All I can do is the best I can. And at the end of the day, if my efforts do not reward me, I am pleased that I tried and came this far.

At this point in the module, honouring my commitment to myself is all that matters. Had I known how painful both literature review and proposal would be, I would manage the outcomes very differently. However, this is hindsight to which we are all accustomed. We never know what a journey may bring us. Only after many trials and tribulations of an unknown journey can we look back and either joy, weep or wail our experiences.