End of Semester Personal Reflection

Emily Lane

The Pennsylvania State University

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This semester has been extremely eye-opening for me. At first, I was very nervous to attempt a Master's, but thanks to Dr. Allie Goldstein, I have felt supported every step of the way. Each assignment I have received detailed feedback regarding both the technical aspects of my assignments like grammar, tone, and citations, but I have also received support and suggestions regarding the content. In regards to a personal reflection, Dr. Goldstein has provided praise, empathy, and kindness. It has really made me feel like I belong in this program.

Along these same lines, at the beginning of this semester I was very shy and nervous to share my opinions. Throughout this course we have had many discussion posts and writing assignments where I had the opportunity to share my opinion with the class and with my instructor. Due to incredibly detailed feedback and supportive classmates, I have begun to feel more confident in presenting my opinions and reflecting on other higher education professionals' work. I have particularly learned a lot from the interview with a higher education professional. If I was not assigned this project, I would not have been bold enough to reach out to Dr. Shurer, director of international programs at Meredith College. This interview encouraged me to continue pursuing international education and international student support.

This semester of study solidified that I have picked a Master's field to pursue that fits my goals and my skillset. I am skilled in collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data while also being passionate about travel and international education. The modules of HIED 808 have shown me that these two skillsets can be strongly utilized within higher education. Furthermore, the instruction in this class concerning how to convey ideas and reflections in a professional tone have been invaluable. I have been able to apply the feedback to my reports at work, and I look forward to encountering more situations to practice article critiques, professional discussions, interviews and more.

The biggest academic challenge I have experienced this semester has been participating in discussion posts with classmates. It has been surprisingly difficult to feel comfortable communicating with my classmates without meeting them in person. I have felt much more self-conscious about how the tone of my comments will be received without body language or facial expressions.

Professionally, this semester has been a challenge. I moved cities within China, and began a new job teaching both biology and chemistry rather than just chemistry. These two changes have been immense because the culture is so different in Wuhan both professionally and casually. Professionally, I have been faced with challenges regarding inequalities, class sizes, and increased preparation required.

I have employed many strategies to overcome these challenges. Regarding the Master's, I began with drafting responses and proofreading them with trusted friends and family. I was encouraged by the supportive responses from classmates, and soon I began building my confidence. Although I still proofread my replies a bit too many times, I'm beginning to feel more comfortable in communicating with my digital classmates.

Professionally, I made conscious effort to actively critically think and utilize professional organization skills that were taught during the class. When presented with a problem, I tried to analyze many perspectives of the problem so I could communicate with other teachers, the students in a class, or my direct supervisors. Through doing this, I noticed that those I communicated with felt more heard and respected, and conflicts were solved more efficiently. Through the improvement I have seen in the last semester, I will continue implementing these tools in my professional life.

I have seen improvement in all categories of the MHE degree learning outcomes. The biggest improvement I have experienced this semester is regarding, "understanding of purpose, audience, and context for written communication and oral presentations". Not only have I felt more effective in my writing, but I find reading and analyzing assignment rubrics to be more natural. At the beginning of the semester I rated myself a 6 in this category, but now I feel confident that I am a 10. I am surprised by the growth I have seen in myself this semester, and look forward to the challenge and academic opportunities that following classes have to offer.