

**Academic Reflection of Knowledge,
Skills, and Abilities**

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Abstract

Scholars enter the college arena for varying reasons, taking numerous paths to get there. A successful student examines each assignment, absorbs the message, and utilizes the skills in various aspects of everyday life. This particular student used a medical crisis as a catalyst for a diverse academic experience. Through divergent course studies, the professors' lessons developed into personal critical thinking skills, which resonated across personal and professional choices.

A college education varies by the individual and the institution. Willing and eager students seek an education that fits their own needs and interests. Future scholars come from backgrounds as distinct as their goals, their experiences guiding their studies. Many begin higher education directly from high school, while others meander and weave through life, until finally landing on a degree path. This student, Pamela Teves, was placed on the Brandman path after recovering from a medical crisis. In June 2017, I had a brain aneurysm. Essentially, two months in the hospital, two brain surgeries, two strokes, and a brief death; I left the hospital with a walker, double vision, and sheer will that my life would not follow the path that was in front of me. In January of 2018, I returned to work, elated that the only lingering evidence was my need of reading glasses. In March of 2018, I resolved to earn my Bachelor's Degree in Applied Studies, which would be followed by a Teaching Credential. Each course I chose was in line with teaching high school English. All of the classes were insightful, inspiring, and sometimes frustrating. Even the courses that irritated me also challenged me to embrace the subject and learn as much as possible. My occupation and personal life have been drastically improved through the knowledge, skills, and abilities that many college courses demanded.

The course which was the most difficult was also the one which forced me to personal levels I was unsure even existed. MATU 203 (Introduction to Statistics) was the subject which I feared on too many levels. I had arranged to take the course on-site but the university was unable to locate a local teacher, so they placed me in the online class. With reservation, I agreed to the change and utilized every resource at my disposal. Time management was essential; I was in attendance at every Zoom workshop, sought guidance through the college tutoring service, and became very comfortable with You Tube statistic advice. When it was finished, I had earned a "B" but the sense of accomplishment went far beyond the grade. I left assured that all things

were possible, if I just gave every assignment my best effort. I seek to encourage my students each day, through my own understanding that one should never give up, instead persevere and take a chance.

Closely linked with perseverance is OLCU 350 (Leadership and Professional Ethics), the ethics course which required me to examine my own ethical framework. As I scrutinized how and why I responded in various ways, I was able to understand my strengths and weaknesses. It was an enlightening eight weeks of instruction, as I dissected the connection between my motivations, preconceived views, and haste of judgment. In my everyday life, as well as work setting, I pause more often, so I do not make swift errors. There are times when I feel that I think too much; that I arrive at a decision much slower than others. This awareness of moral issues has seeped into the classroom, as I seek to model the manner in which my students should be behaving.

I'm sure it is only in my mind, but there seems to be a great deal of people who have physical concerns. FSNU 315 (Nutritional Basis of Disease) allowed me the opportunity to research Crohn's disease, specifically chosen because a close co-worker has been suffering through Crohn's for quite a long time. I wanted to understand specifically what she went through on a daily basis and the course afforded me the resources. In my studies, personalizing an assignment makes it more significant to me. I utilize this concept when working with my students and grandchildren. A subject is much more interesting if there is a personal connection.

I was born and raised in California but prior to HIS 372 (California History), I lacked much of the knowledge that I should have absorbed earlier. For my final project I examined the many ways in which people have damaged California. As an additional assignment, I was tasked with teaching an aspect of my project to a class, any class. A highly involved PowerPoint, filled

with pollution, recycling, and personal responsibility was presented to the Functional Skills Program classroom. The entire experience made me more mindful of the world around me and much more proactive about preserving it.

As a veteran of both the Army and Coast Guard, I was familiar with terrorism but gained profound, valuable insight during my CJCU 474 (Counterterrorism) course. The involved examination of domestic and international terrorism in all of its forms proved troubling, as I was exposed to gender, religious, and socioeconomic hatred. This highly insightful, yet disturbingly unsettled realization of the world in which we live also provided me a new understanding of what we, and specifically young people, face in real time and the internet. It is not an enemy that can be dismissed or minimized.

A college education is an individual journey, which ebbs and flows each day. An enthusiastic, motivated student pulls valuable insight from each lesson, personalizes it, and applies the lessons to everyday life. Through Statistics, I learned the value of perseverance. Ethics showed me the path I follow in decision making. Nutritional Basis of Disease enlightened the uninformed. California History prompted discussion and inspired conservation efforts on a small level within the campus. Counterterrorism educated me about the struggles facing people in the real world and online. All people should follow the advice of Abigail Adams, "Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence" (Adams, n.d.).

References

Adams, A. (n.d.) Inspiring Learning Quotes. Retrieved from

<https://thefederalistpapers.org/posters/abigail-adams-poster-learning-is-not-attained-by-chance>