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Portfolio Self-Reflection
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February, 20 2024

Introduction

Reflecting on my journey as a student of Communication and Media Studies, I've come to appreciate the profound and dynamic nature of this field. It's a discipline that not only taught me theoretical knowledge and practical skills but also deeply influences my perspective on the world and my place within it. Unlike other degrees, Communication studies has given me a broad spectrum of knowledge that I will take with me for the rest of my life.

What I learned:

Communication and media studies covers an extremely broad spectrum, giving me knowledge in many different areas. The knowledge I earned can vary between traditional mass media to different realms of digital communication. Having such a diverse background is necessary and important because an adaptive mindset is essential as the quick evolution of technology in our world. Because of these changes, society demands that we continuously update our knowledge. It has taught me to be quick on my feet, to question the status quo, and to critically analyze the media's role in shaping societal norms and values in my everyday life.

Through my journey over the past four years, I've come to understand why ethical considerations are so important. As we tear apart case studies and theoretical frameworks, the ethical implications of our communication practices become incredibly apparent. It forces me to analyze the responsibility that comes with the power of media, pushing me to argue for

transparency, accuracy and fairness in all forms of communication. It's a realization that our work can influence perceptions, shape cultures and change lives.

Because of this realization I have found a deep appreciation for storytelling within my media work. Through various mediums, whether it's photography, journalism, film, digital platforms, or advertising. I've learned that at the core of good, effective communication is a compelling story to go along with it. Stories have the power to evoke excitement and emotions which adds to any amount of communication.. This understanding has shaped my approach to communication, pushing me to find the human element in every story I tell or analyze.

The Impact on Personal and Professional Growth:

After my years of diving into the deep realm of Communication studies I have gained knowledge that did not only assist me academically, but also personally, in my day to day life. I believed I gained the most knowledge from my interpersonal communication courses, regarding my personal and professional growth. I gained a greater awareness of nonverbal communication, intimate communication and conflict communication. Through effective communication, I've been able to establish and deepen relationships with peers, professors, and professionals. Sharing experiences and expressing thoughts openly has fostered a sense of trust and understanding, which is vital for building strong connections. I have been able to apply this in my field of work, A registered Behavior Technician (RBT). I work with individuals diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and implement ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) therapy. Having to communicate through many different areas with the children and the parent, I have used my effective communication skills.

Throughout college I have run into many disagreements and conflicts whether that is between roommates, friends or school work. My courses in interpersonal communication, specifically crisis communication, have equipped me with the skills to approach conflicts constructively. Organizing my thoughts and actively listening while expressing my perspective calmly has often led to resolutions that have benefited everyone involved.

As graduation approaches, the importance of networking and interviews have become extremely apparent to my future steps. Communication studies has given me the skills to be prepared for various situations that I will need my critical thinking skills for and has given me the confidence to negotiate and actively communicate my needs for any future employment.

In summary, communication studies has been a cornerstone of my college experience, impacting various aspects of my life positively. It has not only facilitated academic and professional achievements but also contributed significantly to my personal growth and the quality of my relationships.

The Areas of Discipline I Specialized in

I struggled to come to the major of Communication Studies but once I did, I chose to concentrate in Media Studies. This allowed me to focus primarily on understanding, analyzing, and critiquing the various aspects of media and its impacts on society, culture, politics, and individual behavior. Throughout my years in communication I studied a range of subjects that include interpersonal communication, crisis communication, mass communication, media psychology, nonverbal communication, social identity and intergroup communication, intimate relationships and media, media and relational maintenance, communication technology/social

change, political communication and more. My areas of expertise would be concentrated in social media, writing, photography and communication styles.

St. Norbert College has a great program for students to get involved in for social scientific research, by using the SONA interdisciplinary research pool. I participated in various research studies from the beginning of my journey at SNC to the very end. Not only was I a participant but I also conducted my own study. The specific research topics I studied and participated in included, intimate relationships, social media impacts and studies on physical and mental characteristics in individuals. By conducting my own research study I not only gained my knowledge academically but also personally. I was able to conduct and organize the study scientifically but also communicate effectively with my participants. Through my courses I was able to mainly use social scientific approaches. I align more with critical approaches as I believe it allows me to use the skills I've gained throughout the years to analyze everything in front of me.

Internship/work experience

Within my college career I have had a job at Milestones Behavioral Pediatrics, working as a RBT (Registered Behavior Technician) for children diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder.) Throughout working here I have broadened my knowledge on how to communicate professionally with my clients and parents. There are many ethical rules that fall into the field of ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) that I had to follow in order to avoid any mal-professional practices and I believe the skills I learned in order to communicate effectively assisted me greatly in this field. The summer going into Senior year I had a photography internship with Katelyn Wilson, a photographer in the Green bay area. Together, we would conduct initial consultations

with potential clients, brainstorm ideas for the photoshoot itself, organize location, clothes, makeup for clients and of course conduct the shoot itself. Through this work, I gained knowledge on various practical skills. I broadened my knowledge on problem solving, time management, marketing, social media, and the technical aspects of my camera. Through this personal experience I learned how to communicate thoroughly with clients as effective communication with clients is key in this field. From the initial consultation to the end of the photoshoot I had to maintain a professional yet supportive relationship with my clients. Having prior knowledge from the courses I've taken for my degree have helped me exceed far more than I thought I would.

Post graduation plans

After graduation I plan on staying in the area for a few years. From the knowledge I have learned in my photography, design courses and my photography internship I have gained a strong passion for photography. Whether that be starting up my own photography business or working for a company, that is the path I would like to take. I will be continuing to work with my internship as well and working on growing my connections. I will also be continuing to work for the company I work for now, Milestones Behavior Pediatrics.

Conclusion

As I enter my final months of my college career and enter post-grad life I am grateful for the knowledge that communication media studies has given me to prepare for this next chapter, personally and professionally. I have studied various topics regarding communications and feel more than prepared to share what I have learned to the world around me.