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Class section: EAP 506

Interview reflection paper

Recently, a number of international students who come to study abroad seem to be increasing. Most of them aim for an achievement in educational institutions. It has been increasingly more difficult for international graduate students to understand the academic expectations in terms of academic writing. As a part of my assignment, I had a chance to interview Alissa Patanarut, a second-year student of MBA of the George Mason University. I relished the opportunity to interview her and came up with some questions that were relevant to my discipline. I gathered information with regard to set questions for interview about interviewee's general background and writing in our discipline, MBA. Basically, the questions were divided into four categories, which are interviewee's background information, conventions of writing or paper format, the genres of academic papers in the major and lastly and the recommendations for improving writing in the discipline. The interview from people, who are more advance than us, is a process for students in order to understand and learn more about my discipline as it is vital that I prepare myself adequately in advance.

To begin with the interview, I asked Alissa questions about her personal background. She is now studying MBA as her second Master degree. The reasons that she chose to pursue an MBA because she wanted to formalize her work experience and possibly advance her career into management/project management. After completing her first Master degree of Public Policy, she thought the MBA would be a great complement to her personal combination of experience and knowledge. Alissa also concluded that academic experiences definitely have helped her develop a solid knowledge base, one that expands to such a wide variety of different areas. Learning experience helps her to be a strong contributor and an independent worker in her professional roles.

While discussing the topic of writing conventions, I asked her about the citation style that is expected by the professors in her discipline. She described that the APA citation manual style is one of the most common citation style that the business school students use. She also said that most of the professors are quite flexible because they are more concerned about the content and the way we express our ideas towards the assignments. Moreover, they concentrated more on seeing student's analysis skill above anything else. In contrary, she referred that her employer prefers the AMA style guide to be used in the report. Even though, in my personal experience, I

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have never used the AMA citation style before and furthermore. I am more comfortable with the APA citation style as my undergraduate degree in the UK all follow the same style. I believe that knowing about the citation style from her would be useful for me to know about the expectations from the professors. In some case, the professors tend to concentrate on the information that has been presented by the students. While others are strict about the way we use citation style.

I then asked her a series of questions related to genres of academic papers in MBA. Regularly, There are different types of assignment depending upon the course material and its objectives. However, she mentioned that in our discipline we are required to focus more on case studies where we directly examine from a given article. After analyzing the article, it is necessary to provide feedback based upon the things that have been taught in the class. MBA professors tend to emphasis on the content of assignments and students' analysis skill that they applied efficiently into each case study. Fortunately, in MBA discipline, how students apply their knowledge and theoretic learning into the case analysis are more concerned rather than using the citation style and how we write the assignments. It is crucial how Alissa helped me understand the assignment and prepared me better for my future position as a MBA graduate student.

In addition, I think, like many international students, we all need good general advices from the antecedent students in order to fulfill our understanding in terms of academic writing in our major. I have been recommended several ways to improve the writing skill. For instance, Alissa indicated that as she is a perfectionist by every sense of the word, so she usually pays a strong attention to detail in all works, which can lead to better writing outcomes. I told her that sometimes I struggle with how to organize the procedure of what to write first in my paper and she did advise me a few methods she regularly uses. In her personal writing style, she likes to start filling out the body then she starts writing the full document from start to finish. Additionally, she suggested that all sources should be well documented and cited throughout the entire process. As a result, it allows her to revise or edit easily. While talking through the steps of how to enhance writing skill, we also explored how to ensure that the resources we choose are reliable. She highlighted that academic students should select journal databases and public articles, etc. In contrast, students should not trust self-made websites since the site author can fabricate information himself or herself. Personally, I feel that this is perfectly understandable as my professors always recommend students to apply sources from academic articles and journals.

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Finally, this interview provides me an important aspect of academic writing in the particular discipline. I learned a lot from her and I feel my knowledge has greatly expanded as a result of this experience. This reflection paper helps me to plan ahead for my future area of MBA, not only me but also it can enrich other graduate pathway students to prepare for their future in their disciplines as well.