MID-SEMESTER REFLECTION

It has been almost 2 months (8 weeks) since our first semester of year 1 in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) had begun. Within this short amount of time, there were many hardships faced in terms of getting used to the new university style of learning. Many students had trouble adapting to this new style of learning and found it hard to cope with the almost overwhelming amount of difficult assignments and tests that had to be done. However, this was also a great learning curve and opportunity for many students to start to grow into a complete adult because every student had to learn to manage their time, carry out their responsibilities, and also learn to build up their social circle all at once. Although it is difficult, many students still managed to strive in this new environment and fully flaunt their ability to stay on top of their life. For me, it was a little hard to adapt to this new environment and new style of learning in the first few weeks. However, I eventually managed to get used to this lifestyle and have learned to manage my tasks efficiently. I have managed to stay on top of my studies, completed all of my assignments on time, got to know more friends, and also exercised regularly after the taking the first month to get used to the university lifestyle.

One of the courses that I have registered for, which is Graduate Success Attributes (UHMT1012-24), lectured by Dr Hadi, actually contributed greatly to helping me to manage my university life successfully. This is because the contents of this course are very important in order for a student to learn and grow into a great student and be the best version of themselves. The purpose of this course is to guide students in developing communication, scholarship, teamwork & leadership, thinking, adaptability, global citizenship, and also enterprising skills. Besides, this course also aims to prepare students to face the challenges of the real-world.

The process of learning in this course in the past 2 months can be divided into a weekly lesson; that is 8 weeks of lesson, one lesson per week. Dr Hadi had been amazing in delivering his lectures on a weekly basis, never failing to teach us new life lessons by the end of every class. The first week of class had been cancelled by the faculty of computing due to unforeseen reasons. In the second week, our first class for this course had been carried out. During this first class, we were introduced to Dr Hadi, who will be lecturing us for this course for the whole semester. Dr Hadi then introduced the course outline to us, covering the aim of this course, its learning outcomes, the plans for each lesson, and also some of his contact information so that we could always keep in touch with him. Then, every student in the classroom was required to make their own name tags to be put on each of our seats so that Dr Hadi will be able to get to know our names. The first class was mostly only ice-breaking and introducing ourselves to both the lecturer and each other. Lastly, our first class ended with an assignment to write a blog in e-learning about our ambition and also our reasons for choosing our career path.

It was a great first lesson, I feel like I had a chance to really think about my ambition and reflect deeply on why I chose this career. It was a great opportunity for me to reflect upon and learn more about myself. Additionally, we were also given an assignment of case study about any issue in the world where we had to research about any issue in the world and write about it in about 1000 to 1500 words, to be handed in on the 4th week of class. That was all for our first class.

Our second class was held on the following week; week 3. In this class, Dr Hadi showed us a video from YouTube about job interviews. Every student was required to pair up with another student to form groups of two. Then, each student had to take note of anything that they have learned from the video and discuss their findings with both their partners and also the whole class. This activity was very helpful in terms of helping the students to learn how to act during real job interviews. From this activity, I have learned that during a job interview, we have to be able to take orders from our interviewers correctly. For example, in the video, the interviewer’s first order to the interviewees was to “write something on the board.”. However, many interviewees had no idea what they had to write so most of them only ended up writing random things like their name, random lines of code, and some even wrote “Hello!”. Finally, one of the interviewees literally wrote the word “something” on the whiteboard, which then peaked the interest of the interviewee and is allowed to proceed to the next questions.

Apart from having to follow orders correctly, I have also learned that in order to answer the question “Tell me more about yourself.”. In the video, many interviewees answered this question either by talking about the things that was already in their resume or boast about their past achievements. As a result, the interviewee lost interest in them and instantly ordered them to get out. Instead, we should answer this question by telling the interviewees about things that they do not know, things which are not written in our resume, and also absolutely never boast about our achievements. All we have to do is to be confident with ourselves and never try too hard to impress the interviewee. After this activity, Dr Hadi carried out a short lecture on the topic of employability. During this lecture we have learned that the top reason why many fresh graduates are unemployed is because they expected an unrealistic amount of salary. The next reason was because they lack the necessary soft skills required to be successfully employed. Hence, from this lesson we were able to have a sense of what traits we should start to learn from now in order to be successfully employed when we get out into the real world. At the end of this class, every student was required to make a short reflection about what we have learned during this class and it had to be submitted on the e-learning website before the day had ended. The lesson learned from this lecture was of great help to me as I have always wondered if there were any tips for me to perform better during job interviews, and my wonders have been put away after this class because it had definitely help to educate all students about the tips and tricks to perform well in our future job interviews.

On the following week; week 4, our third class with Dr Hadi was carried out. The topic of lecture for this class was “Scholarship”. “Scholarship Skills” is one of the seven main skills or attributes of a successful UTM graduate. It involves information management skills and also lifelong learning skills. In this class, Dr Hadi divided us into five groups, each choosing an attribute if being a holistic human; a human who is whole or complete. Each group was supposed to appoint a leader and discuss about their specific topic. Then, each group leaders had to carry out a forum on being a holistic human which lasted for around 30 minutes. I was appointed as the leader for the group with the topic “Being a responsible citizen.”. I was able to learn a lot from my group members as we were discussing because every member had their own outlook on this topic and I was able to listen and piece together all of their views about this topic into my own concept, which I then shared to the whole class during the forum. To me, being a responsible citizen does not only consist of the usual actions such as picking up trash whenever you see them on the floor, never talk bad about your country, etc… being a responsible citizen involves much more than just doing the basics. It almost involves all other traits as well such as being a successful student, being a good son and daughter, being a good leader, and also being a good servant of God.

This is because in order to be a responsible citizen, we have to first be a successful student so that we can have the necessary knowledge in all aspects to make our country a better place. Next, in order to be a responsible citizen, we also have to be a good son and daughter. We have to take care of our own parents and not just leave their wellbeing in the hands of the government. This will help reduce the burden on our government and hence, we will be a better, more responsible citizen. Additionally, we also have to be a good leader for us to be a responsible citizen. This is because being a good leader allows us to lead anybody into helping to better our country in all aspects. Lastly, being a good servant of God is of great significance to being a responsible citizen. This is because being a good servant of God will cause us to learn to have all of the traits above as they are all taught in the Bibles no matter which religion. Hence, it will definitely cause us to be a more responsible citizen.

The third class ended after the forum, and we also had to hand in our individual case study before the end of week 4. I was able to learn about how to be a more holistic person in this lesson. Thus, week four’s lecture had been one of my favourite classes of this course because I was really able to learn some important lessons and change myself to be a better person after attending this lecture. After this lesson, I was constantly aware of all the things that I should do in any scenario in order to drive myself further into being a holistic human. As for my individual case study, I was able to complete my draft in time for Dr Hadi to check for any errors and then I handed it into the e-learning website. This assignment was also a great learning opportunity for me because I had to learn how to cite different types of texts such as academic texts, newspaper articles, magazine, journal articles, etc… I had a very hard time figuring out how to write the whole thing professionally at first, but in the end, I was able to overcome all the challenges and managed to complete it in time with the aid of Dr Hadi. This was all at the end of week 4.

Unfortunately, the fifth week of class had been cancelled because Dr Hadi had to attend a conference for a presentation of his research. I had silently prayed that Dr Hadi’s presentation would be a great success. Moving on to the sixth week of class, we had our fourth class with Dr Hadi. In this class, Dr Hadi surprised us with an impromptu public speaking for around 3 minutes in front of the class. Many students including myself were shocked to hear that and some students instantly started to panic. However, I tried my best to keep calm and prepared my topic for the speech. I gave it a good thought for roughly 5 whole minutes before deciding that I was going to talk about “Social Media, it’s pros and cons.”. This was a good topic to talk about in my opinion because it is without a shadow of doubt that in the current generation, almost everybody in the world have and are constantly using social media to update their daily lives. This phenomenon can bring may benefits to the society such as getting to know the latest happenings around the globe just by scrolling through social media, being ale to connect and communicate with friends and families in an instant no matter where they are around the world. However, there are also many cons to the usage of social media if it is not regulated and controlled properly. Some of the cons include being “addicted” to social media, where many people tend to constantly be on their phones scrolling through social media. Next, it can also be a platform for cyberbullying or even worse, stalking. This is extremely dangerous as anybody could easily excess our personal data on social media to find out where we live, where we study, where we work, etc… which is the main cause to many cases of kidnapping. These are all the points that I have managed to think about in the short period of time given to us but luckily for me, Dr Hadi did not call out my name on that class and so I did not have to speak on that day. However, I have used the extra time to better prepare myself for my speech on the next class. We were also supposed to be given a short lecture on communication during that class but I think we ran out of time before being able to undergo that lecture because the impromptu public speaking took up all of the time. I have learned a couple of new things from listening to my classmates speak during that class and that class was quite educational to me.

In the following week; week 7, our class with Dr Hadi had to cancel our class last minute because he was sick. To be very honest with myself, I was actually relieved that the class was cancelled because I had to study for a test in the afternoon on that day, and there were only a few hours left for me to do my revision. However, I still hoped that Dr Hadi will be able to get better soon in order for him to continue carrying out his duty as a great lecturer. Even though Dr Hadi could not conduct the lecture on that day, he still gave us some assignments to work on during our holidays, which was this mid-semester reflection. Hence, this was all that happened on week 7 for our course of graduate success attributes.

As a conclusion, there were many hardships faced by every student including myself in the course of these seven weeks. However, with the necessary determination and enough of hard work, we were able to overcome these challenges and were able to adapt to the university style of learning and living. One of the contributors to our success was the course of Graduate Success Attributes (UHMT1012-24), taught by Dr Hadi. The goal of this course was to equip the students with the necessary skills in order for them to be successful graduates, which can then lead them to also be successful in life. Throughout the 7 weeks of studying this course, I have learned many things. Hence, to answer the question “What have you learned from the course?”. My answer is the most important lesson that I have learned is the mastery of Soft Skills will take us a long way in life, specifically, communication skills. With great communication skills, we will be able to convey and deliver our thoughts or ideas clearly so that the others can understand and grasp what we are trying to say. This will also make us a respectable leaser as we are able to convey our thoughts strongly in order to convince others to follow us. Not just that, even during job interviews we have to have strong communication skills in order to communicate well with our interviewers and increase our chances of landing ourselves a good job. There are also many other lessons that I have learned from this course such as how to be a holistic human, but the most significant lesson that I have learned is definitely the importance of communication skills.

Next, to answer the question “How will you advance your learning for the next part of the semester?”, my answer is I will keep striving and keep working hard to improve my communication skills by trying to talk in front of a crowd more often, be it in front of a group of friends, a group of strangers, or even in front of the class. This will definitely help to boost my confidence and greatly improve my communication skills in the long run. Besides, I can also take up some leadership roles in some clubs in order to force myself into speaking up more often. I believe that all these steps will definitely bring me one step closer to being a successful graduate.

Lastly, to answer the question “What challenges have you faced and how will you solve them?”, my answer is that most of the challenges that I have faced at the beginning of the semester have already been solved and overcome. However, there are still some small challenges that I am facing such as lacking in confidence when I speak, sometimes feeling lazy to revise, and also laying in bed for too many hours which makes my days unproductive. To solve the issue of lack in confidence, when speaking, the steps are similar as stated in the previous paragraph, which are speaking in front of crowds more often and also taking up leadership roles. Moving on, in order to solve the issue of sometimes feeling lazy, I have decided to use results to motivate myself to not be lazy by constantly reminding myself that I have to achieve a minimum CGPA of 3.70. Lastly, to solve the issue of being unproductive, I have decided not to return to my room after classes and instead, head straight to the library so that I have no choice but to get things done there and not be distracted by the comfort of my bed. This marks the end of this reflection.