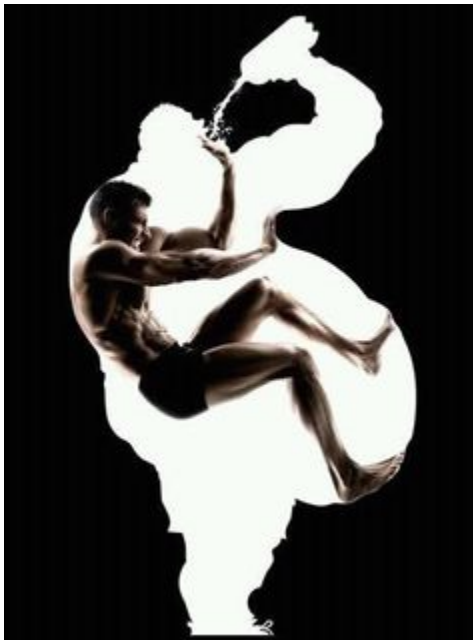


Writing Boot Camp



Before anything else, it is important for me to summarize and soak in all of the feedback I have received so far. As the weeks progressed, I noticed that the critique I received was very much like the feedback sandwich that Peter explained in the first week – the ‘constructive stuff’ squeezed between two wholemeal slices of ‘positivity’.

“I enjoyed the flow and logic of your journal but I found it a bit heavy to read, too many big words – perhaps over-written? Highlight the main key lessons as it can drag out. However, your punctuation was on point and your writing shows a very clear understanding of the readings.”

I appreciate all the feedback I have received because it has truly lifted the awareness I have for my writing. However, in all honesty, much like Argyris (1991) proposes, I have never been handed feedback the way MGMT300 allows which caused me to be a bit defensive because up until now, I never thought that I had an issue with “heavy writing”. I had put in place defensive routines such as not explicitly enquiring about an issue of mine but instead using past experiences to find an appropriate solution. This was to prevent myself from experiencing embarrassment (Argyris, 1991) from the idea of not knowing what to do. The unintended consequence of this routine is that it has prevented me from identifying and reducing the causes of this embarrassment.

As I use the second stage of Daudelin (1996) to search for possible reasons for this, I realised that heavy writing has always been prevalent in my style since high school. I remember when my year 11 English teacher crossed out a whole paragraph with the brief note “less is more”. My “can do attitude” at the time, blinded me from seeing what I needed to work on because although half a page had been crossed out, I was given an impressive grade. So I continued with the thought that doing the same thing would get me the same mark. Linking back to the previous reading on feedback, I wish my English teacher had looked at the bigger, long term picture for my benefit (Kim & Mauborgne, 2002) because the review process only prompted short term behavioural improvements (i.e. I just eliminated the crossed out paragraph from my writing). “Less is more” was not enough for me to change and I continued to use Argyris’ (1991) governing variables of minimizing losing and negative feelings while trying to maximize winning.

The tentative theory that I have come up with from all of this, is that my desire to critically analyse text, caused me to explain points that may have been irrelevant instead of pinpointing the ‘muscle’ of it all. This meant that although my writing was extensive and thorough, the best journal entry was stuck inside a fat blob of writing. So how do I fix this? It comes down to the basics. Draft, proof-read, edit and repeat until I am happy that my “bodybuilder of a journal entry” over-powers the “obesity of excessive writing”.

If you read over my past entries, you will find that I have tried to use most of the previous feedback to craft this very different journal entry of mine. From 1000 words to way less. From using “big, hard-to-understand vocabulary” to simplifying my words to as if my mind was talking. I have focused on the main points and have followed Daudelin’s stages of reflection. I have purposely disregarded some of the content from other readings because this week I have taken a different approach. Instead of using all the content to explain everything I have learnt, I have shrunk it down. So in the span of a couple of weeks, I feel that yes, I have put my “heavy writing” through an intensive writing boot camp and hopefully the results show.

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