

# It's a new day

So, here we are in week five. The solo practice and the team practice is over. As we enter this new phase, I thought it would be useful to encourage you to take stock of how you are doing and to re-emphasise some critical/important parts of the course.

I am pretty sure that there will be something in this post that many/most/all of you might reflect upon in your next learning journal (hint, hint).

Let's go back to the learning outcomes of the course. I think it's useful to review these as they will (a) help shape your future learning journals—for the better—and that will (b) help with your summative learning journal. There is method behind what goes on here.

The learning outcomes from the [Course Outline](#) lists a number of things that, by the end of this course, it is expected that the you will be able to do. Let me talk you through these in some more detail now that you're 'hitting your stride' in the course.

## Identify the theories and perspectives of management that are relevant to their team and organisational environment

The readings are allocated to particular weeks. However, as I said at the beginning of the course, that is done with a view to ensuring you get through them, rather than being the best order. Depending on how you individual, your team, and your firm is doing, you should start to be more tactical (or maybe even strategic in your reading). Think about the different types of challenges you are facing. You may want to revisit earlier readings or skip ahead. That being said, by the end of the course you want to make sure you have read them all, and I would expect see many of them surfacing in your summative learning journal.

## Illustrate these theories, perspectives, contexts, and assumptions with examples from their own experiences

That really should be evident in your weekly learning journals. If it is not the case, you may well struggle with the summative learning journal. Just because you are labeling things with 'theory' that does not mean you are using the readings well. Indeed, looking through the weekly journals it is fair to say that many people seem to be doing a 'once over lightly' with the readings (judging by how you use them). To repeat; if you are just using theory/the readings to label 'stuff', is that really learning? I'll be commenting that more to individuals as I read your journals.

## Analyse situations in order to identify appropriate interventions and thereby improve their own, their team-members', and their company's performance

The fact that you have meaningfully thought about the situations you, or your team, or your firm, is confronting is the essence of a good learning journal. Remember, Daudelin's framework (and Kolb's too) include an analysis component, so embrace it and make the analysis that you have done obvious. By the way, I'm no longer citing the Daudelin or Kolb articles ... they should be common knowledge amongst our community/class.

## Work effectively in a simulated cross-functional management team in a way that preserves and develops shareholder value

This is perhaps the heart of the work you do in the simulation, and it behooves you to explicitly do at least one learning journal on that topic. Some people will grow this into the opening section of their summative learning journal

## Act upon their reflections of their individual learning and performance in the course (and in their team) in a manner that demonstrably improves their learning and performance

If I cannot see that in your weekly learning journals, it will be hard for you a meaningful summative learning journal. As I give you feedback on your learning journals, this is what I will probably be emphasising most. Remember, the ability to evaluate/assess your own work and your own learning and to see how can improve is a very valuable transferable skill for the workplace. As much as you will want it to be otherwise, you will find that many managers will only give you feedback when you are doing badly; and some will only give you feedback after a period of sustained poor performance—by then it may be too late for you to recover. They may have permanently formed a bad opinion of you and your work. The ability to reflect well and to improve on what you do can make the difference between being seen as a good/outstanding employee (who is destined to do well) and someone who is seen as so much deadwood who needs to be constantly managed (I'm exaggerating the poles here, but I hope you see what I mean).

## Demonstrate that they can give and utilise feedback from others to improves their performance and learn

I have had a number of people coming to me talking about the quality of feedback they have received from their peers. The often report is 'nice' and 'encouraging', but it fails to give them anything that is concrete or actionable that they can use to improve their learning journals.

At the risk of sounding like I am waving a big stick, I will remind you that what is said on the [page about assignments](#); in giving feedback you must address: (a) How well the journal meets the guidelines provided by Daudlin; (b) The extent to which the journal demonstrates achievement in the higher levels of Bloom et al.'s (1956) taxonomy of the cognitive domain; (c) The quality of the writing; and finally, (d) You must **providing specific actionable ways** they might improve (emphasis in the original). If you do not do that, how can the person to who you are giving feedback reasonably be expected to utilise it? That is why "Each instance of ... failing to give meaningful feedback will result in a 5-percent penalty being applied to your summative learning journal". The quality of your feedback will be counts and will be checked.

As is the case of acting upon reflections, the ability to give actionable feedback is also an important (and useful) transferable skill. You are all smart people, and sooner or later you will probably be put in charge of people (if you are not already). The ability to give actionable feedback is important and it will make your life easier in the workplace. You do not want to be known as one of those managers who never give feedback until it is too late.

As always, if you struggle with any of these learning outcomes, feel free to come and talk to me (or email me, or put something up on Piazza). Or you might talk with the people in your team; if you really believe in the notion of 'mutual accountability' (Katzenbach and Smith, 1992), you will be striving to ensure everyone in your team does as well as the best in your team. There is no marking 'on the curve' in the course and if everyone deserves an A-grade that is what they will get, and I will be a happy person.

Looking forward to the summative learning journal (at the end of the course), you should seek to demonstrate that you have actually met/delivered on some (or probably all) of these learning outcomes. You might not do it explicitly (and it could be pretty boring if you do it explicitly), but there should be strong evidence that you have hit these outcomes.

Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (1992). Why teams matter. *McKinsey Quarterly*, (3), 3–27.