Journal#3: Critical Thinking

The period of postgraduate is an important time for us and this period of time will have a great impact on our lives. Therefore, we should consider and prepare how we can become a master student in learning critically and seriously.

Firstly, before the first class of our courses, I should check every course’s syllabus and read every entry carefully, including course description, course goal, materials, requirement and evaluation, and attendance policy. At the same time, I can search the course-related materials on Library.gmu.edu or Google Scholar in order to obtain more detailed information about what we will learn and what will be expected of us in the academic field. Then I can make a note of that I feel confused so that I could ask the teacher questions. What’s more, another important thing for us is grading policy. How to get great grades is a primary task for me during the whole semester. I must make sure that I familiar with all grading statement and ask professor some advice to well prepare for the class. In this way, I believe I can achieve my academic goal and benefit a lot from thoroughly understand the requirement of each course.

Secondly, based on last semester's experience, I can figure out what study and learning advantage or disadvantage that I have. I form a profound understanding of knowledge and skills of what I not good at and what I should develop. According to these experiences, I need to set a study goal and make a detailed study plan to make up for my shortcomings and deficiencies. For instance, the oral presentation is one of the weaknesses of my English ability. So I should do more practices on this skill whenever I have extra time. What I need to is finding out my problem and work out some solution to solve it. Only recognizing and correcting my weaknesses and shortcomings, I can earn more strength and make a great progress for my study.

Finally, in many cases, I just take in the knowledge unilaterally. It isn't learned and masters this knowledge truly just by listening. So I need to keep a question in my mind “Can I explain this to someone not in class?”. After I learned a new knowledge point, I can try my best to use my own words and to illustrate it to a person who isn’t familiar the concept at all. If that person accepts my statement successfully, it would prove that I have learned it well enough. According to this method, I can examine if I master the new knowledge or skill certainly.