

Reflection

Introduction

My coursework at Old Dominion University, combined with my experience as a student-athlete, has helped me build three core skills that are important for both my education and my future career: research and time management, communication and teamwork, and typing fluency as part of digital literacy. These skills did not appear overnight. They developed over time through specific assignments, athletic responsibilities, and intentional reflection. I represent them in three main sets of artifacts: a research paper and planning notes; a group class project and examples of on-field communication; and timed writing tasks with typing test results. In this reflection, I explain how each skill developed, what I did to practice it, and how interdisciplinary coursework and scholarly readings shaped my thinking. I also discuss what I learned from creating and analyzing my artifacts and how these experiences prepare me for the demands of the modern workforce.

Research and Time Management

The first major skill area is research and time management. My artifacts here include a research paper abstract on social media and college students' study habits, a discussion board post about evaluating sources, and a deadline planning note with clear timestamps. Together, these pieces show not only what I produced but also how I organized my work behind the scenes. For my research paper, I designed a short survey to gather data on how often students use social media while studying, what platforms they prefer, and how they feel this affects their focus and grades. I combined the survey data with a literature review to examine how social media use can help or hurt study patterns. This meant I needed to find credible academic sources, understand their methods and findings, and connect those ideas to my own results. I used the CRAAP test

Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose to judge whether a source was trustworthy and useful. This step helped me filter out weaker sources and focus on peer-reviewed articles and reputable reports. The discussion board post served as a place to talk through my thinking about sources. In that post, I explained why I selected certain articles and rejected others, and I reflected on how bias or outdated information might affect my conclusions. Writing about my choices made me more aware of how important it is to question where information comes from. The planning note, which included specific times and dates, showed how I broke the project into smaller pieces. I listed when I would search for articles, when I would draft each section, when I would revise, and when I would complete the final upload. Because I also had football practices, team meetings, and workouts, I had to be very intentional about when I worked on each phase of the paper. Producing this research project required me to blend several disciplines. Communication studies helped me think about theories of media use and media effects such as how constant notifications might distract students or create habits of multitasking. Educational psychology introduced ideas about study behavior, self-regulation, and motivation. Basic statistics helped me interpret survey results by looking at correlations and descriptive patterns. In IDS 300W and research methods modules, I learned practical tools like how to structure an argument, how to integrate quotes and paraphrases smoothly, and how to format citations in APA style. These courses showed me that strong research is not only about finding information but also about presenting it in a clear, organized, and ethical way. Repko and Szostak (2021) argue that interdisciplinary research combines methods and perspectives from different fields to address complex issues. My project followed this idea by taking communication theory to explain how social media can distract students and using educational measures to assess how that distraction relates to time spent studying or grades. Junco's (2012) study on Facebook use

and student engagement gave me a concrete example of how social media can be measured and analyzed. By comparing my small survey to Junco's larger study, I could see where my results fit into a bigger picture and where they might differ. Time management was not only a topic in my research but also a skill I practiced while doing the project. I used time-blocking, which meant I set aside specific times of day just for researching, writing, or revising. I also gave myself a final upload window before my actual deadline. This approach is supported by Britton and Tesser's (1991) findings that students who plan their time and follow a schedule tend to perform better academically. My planning note shows how I separated the work into smaller tasks such as finding sources, drafting the introduction, revising the conclusion, and checking citations. By spreading these tasks out, I reduced last-minute stress and had time to improve my writing. The main challenge in this area was bringing together sources from different disciplines in a way that stayed clear and easy to follow. When I first drafted the paper, I tried to include too many ideas at once, which made the writing feel crowded. Through revision, I learned to focus on the most important points, to group similar ideas together, and to use topic sentences to guide the reader. I also learned to prioritize peer-reviewed sources, compare findings across studies, and question results that seemed too extreme or not well-supported. These habits of careful planning, critical reading, and revision are not limited to school projects. They apply directly to workplace tasks such as preparing reports, analyzing data, and meeting deadlines. Employers frequently list research skills, data literacy, and time management as important competencies for new hires. NACE (2018) describes career readiness in terms of abilities like problem solving, professionalism, and communication. By planning my research project around football demands, finishing it early, and basing my argument on credible evidence, I showed that I can manage multiple responsibilities while still producing quality work. This combination of academic rigor

and practical scheduling prepares me for jobs where I will need to gather information, evaluate it carefully, and deliver results on time.

Communication and Teamwork

The second major skill area is communication and teamwork. My artifacts for this section are a group marketing project summary and description of my role, a football on-field communication log, and a peer feedback email I received after a class presentation. These artifacts highlight how I communicate in both academic and athletic settings and how I contribute to team success. In the marketing class, our group was assigned to develop a simple campaign for a product and present it to the class. I served as the research lead and one of the main presenters. My responsibilities included collecting background information on the product and target audience, organizing that information into clear points, and helping design the slides so they were easy to follow. I also helped schedule group meetings and rehearsals. During practice, I encouraged my teammates to talk through their parts, and I offered suggestions on how to make transitions smoother and visuals more readable. On the football field, communication takes a different form but is just as important. My on-field communication log records specific plays where I had to make quick verbal calls, adjust formations, or alert teammates to what I saw from the opposing team. In games, there is no time for long explanations. Calls must be short, specific, and confident. Miscommunication can lead to blown assignments or big plays for the other team. Through experience, I learned to speak clearly, watch for non-verbal cues from teammates, and stay calm even when the game situation was intense. After our marketing group presentation, I received a peer feedback email that pointed out both my strengths and areas for improvement. Classmates praised my clear speaking voice, my organization of the research section, and my ability to keep eye contact with the audience.

They also suggested that I could improve by slowing down slightly at key points and using even more visuals to highlight main ideas. This feedback was helpful because it gave me a more objective view of how others see my communication style. These experiences relate to ideas from organizational behavior, communication studies, and sport psychology. Organizational behavior emphasizes role clarity, coordination, and shared goals. In our marketing group, we assigned specific roles: research lead, slide designer, presenter, and editor to avoid confusion and duplication of effort. Communication studies explore how messages are framed, how listening works, and how feedback can improve performance. I practiced these ideas by carefully planning what I wanted to say, listening to my teammates' ideas, and responding positively to constructive criticism. Sport psychology introduces concepts like shared mental models, trust, and stress management. On the field, our team used pre-game talks, film study, and practice to build a shared understanding of plays and responsibilities. Salas, Sims, and Burke (2005) describe key components of effective teamwork, including shared mental models, adaptability, and mutual performance monitoring. I saw these concepts in action both in the classroom and in sports. For example, in football, pre-snap reads and practiced signals allowed us to adjust quickly without confusion. In the marketing project, rehearsals had a similar effect: everyone knew the order of speakers, the flow of slides, and the key points to emphasize. One of the biggest challenges I faced in group work was balancing assertiveness with openness. As a student-athlete and someone used to taking leadership roles, I am comfortable speaking up and making decisions. However, in a classroom group, it is important that everyone feels heard. I had to learn when to step forward to provide direction and when to step back and ask others what they thought. Peer feedback helped me recognize moments where I could invite more input or adjust my tone to be more collaborative. From both football and class projects, I learned that strong teams are built on

communication, trust, and preparation. Establishing clear roles, creating a schedule, and practicing together reduced common problems such as last-minute scrambling, overlapping work, or unclear expectations. These lessons carry over directly into the workplace. Many jobs require working in teams, contributing to meetings, and handling projects where different people are responsible for different parts. My artifacts show that I can take on leadership roles, communicate under pressure, and respond to feedback qualities that employers value.

Typing Fluency and Digital Literacy

The third skill area is typing fluency, which I see as a part of digital literacy. My artifacts include a 25-minute timed online essay, a typing test result of 84 words per minute with 96% accuracy, and assignment timestamps that show how quickly I drafted and uploaded work. While typing may seem like a basic skill, it has a big impact on how efficiently I can complete assignments and communicate in digital environments. The timed essay required me to read a prompt, plan a response, and write a clear, organized piece within a strict time limit. To succeed, I needed to think quickly, outline my main points, and type fast enough to get my ideas on the page before time ran out. At first, I found timed writing stressful because I worried about making mistakes or running out of time. However, repeated practice helped me build confidence. I started by sketching a brief outline even just a few bullet points before typing full sentences. This simple step gave my writing more structure and helped me stay focused. The typing test documented my speed and accuracy. Reaching 84 WPM with 96% accuracy showed me that I had a strong foundation, but I still worked to maintain that level under different conditions. I practiced typing not only during formal tests but also when writing emails, notes, and discussion posts. Over time, typing became more automatic, which allowed me to pay more attention to the content of my writing instead of the mechanics of hitting each key. Typing fluency connects to

digital literacy, human computer interaction, and composition studies. The OECD (2019) describes digital skills as essential for success in modern workplaces, where computers, tablets, and phones are used in almost every job. When typing is slow or full of errors, it can make simple tasks like sending emails or writing reports take much longer. When typing is fast and accurate, it reduces cognitive load meaning I can spend more mental energy on organizing ideas, analyzing information, or revising my work. In writing courses such as IDS 300W, I learned strategies that work well with strong typing skills. These include outlining, drafting in stages, and focusing on revision. For example, I might use my typing speed to get a rough draft done quickly, then go back and revise for clarity, organization, and grammar. Timed writing assignments helped me practice making quick decisions about what information was most important and how to express it concisely. Through these experiences, I learned that typing fluency is not just about speed. It must be paired with planning and structure. If I type quickly but do not think carefully about my main idea, my writing can become confusing. By combining fast, accurate typing with prewriting strategies, I can produce clear work within limited time frames. In the workplace, this ability is valuable for tasks like taking meeting notes, writing follow-up emails, preparing drafts of reports, or entering data accurately. My artifacts show that I can handle written communication efficiently and professionally in digital settings.

Integration and Interdisciplinary Insights

Looking across all three skill areas research and time management, communication and teamwork, and typing fluency I see how interdisciplinary learning has shaped my growth. Rather than working in isolated boxes, these skills interact with each other. For example, strong time management supports communication, because being prepared and on schedule makes me a more reliable teammate. Typing fluency supports research and writing, because it allows me to

draft and revise more effectively. Repko and Szostak (2021) emphasize that integrating theories and methods from different fields is important for solving complex problems. My research project on social media drew on communication theory, educational psychology, and statistics to understand a real issue that affects many students. Junco (2012) offered a model for connecting social media behavior with student engagement, which helped me think critically about my survey findings. Salas et al. (2005) gave me a framework for understanding teamwork in both sports and classroom groups, showing how shared mental models and adaptability lead to better performance. Britton and Tesser (1991) supported my use of planned schedules and time-blocking as ways to improve academic outcomes. The OECD (2019) report on digital skills reminded me that abilities like typing, online research, and navigating digital tools are not optional extras; they are core expectations in today's economy. When I connect my artifacts to these scholarly works, I can see more clearly how my classroom learning and athletic experiences prepare me not just for grades, but for real workplaces where I will need to handle information, communicate with others, and use technology every day.

Conclusion

Overall, reflecting on these artifacts shows deliberate development in three connected skill areas: research and time management, communication and teamwork, and typing fluency as part of digital literacy. Through coursework, especially in IDS 300W, I learned how to find and evaluate sources, structure arguments, use APA style, and think across disciplines. Through athletics, I strengthened my discipline, communication under pressure, and teamwork. Through targeted assignments and practice, I improved my speed and accuracy in typed communication. These experiences have given me measurable improvements and transferable competencies. I can plan and complete research projects on time, contribute effectively to group work in class

and on the field, and handle written communication efficiently in digital formats. IDS 300W and other interdisciplinary courses taught me not only what to learn but how to learn by connecting ideas, using evidence, and reflecting on my own growth. As I move forward, I plan to keep using interdisciplinary strategies, deliberate practice, and reflection to build on these skills. They will support my success as a student, as an athlete, and as a future professional in a dynamic, fast-changing workforce.

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