

Reflection on the Summer Research Experience: Unraveling Mental Health in Rugby

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The journey of conducting summer research, exploring the intricate realm of mental health within the context of rugby, has been nothing short of transformative. As I reflect upon this experience, I find that it not only deepened my understanding of mental health but also enriched my leadership skills through unexpected twists and turns in the research process.

Navigating Research Direction and the Role of Adaptability

One significant aspect of this research journey was the evolution of its direction. At the outset, my focus was centered on examining sex differences in mental health symptoms using the SCAT 5 protocol. However, I soon realized that there were more critical and foundational aspects to explore before delving into such specific nuances. This early pivot in my research direction taught me the importance of adaptability and a willingness to reevaluate and adjust my approach when necessary—a key leadership trait.

Adaptability emerged as a defining theme throughout this research endeavor. Flexibility in thought and action became an indispensable part of my daily routine. Whether it was revising research questions, redefining the scope of my study, or refining data collection methods, adaptability was the guiding principle. This experience highlighted that effective leadership is often synonymous with flexibility, as leaders must be prepared to pivot and reassess strategies when faced with unforeseen challenges or opportunities.

Broadening the Horizon and the Role of Foundational Knowledge

While some of the initial research might not have seemed directly pertinent to my specific research results, it was a crucial part of my journey. It taught me that leadership involves the ability to see the bigger picture and to recognize that seemingly unrelated knowledge and experiences can contribute to a more holistic understanding. This broader perspective is a vital leadership skill that enables a deeper comprehension of complex issues and the ability to make informed decisions.

Additionally, I learned the importance of patience and persistence in research. The process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation can be slow and challenging, but it is during these moments of uncertainty that leadership skills come to the fore. The ability to persevere through setbacks and uncertainties and to maintain a clear vision of the research's ultimate goal is a fundamental trait of effective leadership.

Observing Leadership from My Research Advisor

My research advisor, Dr. Chintoh, played a pivotal role in my leadership experience throughout this journey. Her guidance and mentorship went beyond the technical aspects of research and

extended into the realm of leadership. Dr. Chintoh's leadership style was marked by her adaptability, resilience, and ability to foster a collaborative and supportive research environment.

I observed how Dr. Chintoh's adaptability allowed her to pivot research projects when needed, demonstrating that adaptability is not just a theoretical concept but a practical skill that can drive successful research outcomes. Her openness to new ideas and her willingness to reassess and refine research directions served as a model for effective leadership.

Furthermore, Dr. Chintoh's dedication to foundational knowledge and thorough research methods underscored the importance of a strong intellectual foundation. Her meticulous attention to detail and commitment to producing rigorous research inspired me to approach my work with the same level of dedication.

Connecting Research to Leadership Skills

Through this research journey, I've come to appreciate how leadership skills and research are intrinsically intertwined. Effective leadership demands adaptability, the capacity to see the bigger picture, a commitment to foundational knowledge, and the patience to navigate complexity. These skills are not only essential in research but also in leadership roles where one must guide and inspire others toward a common goal.

As I reflect upon this summer research experience, I am reminded that leadership is not just about leading others but also about leading oneself. The ability to self-reflect, adapt, and grow in response to changing circumstances is the bedrock of leadership. This summer research has not only expanded my academic horizons but has also equipped me with invaluable leadership skills that will serve me well in my academic and professional journey.

Growth as a Leader through Summer Research

The summer research experience dedicated to unraveling mental health in the context of rugby has been a profound journey of growth as a leader. As I look back on this transformative experience, I find that my leadership skills have evolved in significant ways.

One of the most fundamental lessons I've learned is the importance of adaptability. Navigating the twists and turns of research, from shifting research directions to adapting methodologies, has reinforced the notion that adaptability is not just a valuable trait but an essential one. Effective leaders must be willing to pivot, reassess, and adjust their strategies when faced with unforeseen challenges or opportunities. This newfound adaptability will undoubtedly serve me well in any leadership role I undertake.

Furthermore, this research journey has broadened my horizons and enriched my foundational knowledge. I've come to appreciate that leadership involves the ability to see the bigger picture, recognizing that seemingly unrelated knowledge and experiences can contribute to a more holistic understanding. Leadership is not just about leading others but also about leading

oneself, and this expanded perspective has empowered me to make more informed decisions and guide others more effectively.

Observing leadership in action through the mentorship of my research advisor, Dr. Chintoh, has also played a significant role in my growth as a leader. Her adaptability, resilience, and commitment to rigorous research have served as a model for effective leadership. Learning from her leadership style has enriched my own approach and inspired me to foster a collaborative and supportive research environment in my future endeavors.

In conclusion, this summer research experience has been a catalyst for my growth as a leader. It has imparted valuable lessons in adaptability, a broader perspective, and the importance of foundational knowledge. I am now better equipped to navigate the complexities of leadership roles, whether in research, academia, or beyond. This journey has not only deepened my understanding of mental health but has also enriched my capacity to lead effectively and make a meaningful impact in my academic and professional pursuits.