**Student Self-Understanding as the Foundation for Entrepreneurial Activity**

***(Taken from Babson SEE Program. Source: K. Bishop Based on Nixon, Bishop, Clause, & Kelemgor (2006) Prior Knowledge & Entrepreneurial Discovery. International Journal of Entrepreneurship Education, 4: 1-18.)***

***Part 1: Developing Information about Your Personal Accomplishments***

**For the purposes of this assignment, please complete the following:**

* List at least 5 of your most significant **personal accomplishments**. Personal accomplishments should meet the following three criteria:
  + Something that you are proud to have accomplished
  + Something that you enjoyed accomplishing
  + Something that you think that you did very well

For example, you may have worked on an entrepreneurial team to successfully launch a new product. Alternatively, you may have trained for 6 months to do a century ride (100 miles) on a bicycle for charity.

* No one else needs to share your views of the significance of these accomplishments. Awards are NOT accomplishments. As you consider your accomplishments, focus on the tasks accomplished rather than the rewards that might have resulted from those tasks.
* When considering your accomplishments, be sure to include accomplishments related to activities outside of work such as hobbies or interests or even accomplishments from your childhood in addition to accomplishments from your work. All of these as well as other categories of accomplishments can and should be included as long as they meet the 3 criteria discussed above.
* After you have listed your accomplishments, prioritize them based on their on their significance to YOU. Your most significant accomplishment will be ranked number one and so on down to at least 5.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Personal Accomplishments** | **Significance Rank** |
| 1. | |  |  |
|  | |  |
| 2. | |  |  |
|  | |  |
| 3. | |  |  |
|  | |  |
| 4. | |  |  |
|  | |  |
| 5. | |  |  |
|  | |  |

***Part 2: Charting Personal Accomplishments with Knowledge Skills and Abilities***

This exercise will help you better understand your unique abilities that have contributed to your accomplishments. Having this understanding may help you formulate strategies in the future or make discoveries of valuable venture ideas that fit with you personally. Research has shown that “personal fit” leads to more successful ventures.

**Instructions for Completing the Abilities List:**

1. In the first column (see attached template), write a brief description or label for each accomplishment on your list from the first part of the activity. You may want to list them in the ranking you noted.
2. For each accomplishment, ask yourself, “What was it about me, what particular knowledge, skills, or abilities did I possess or demonstrate that contributed to my success with this particular accomplishment?” Write the answers to this question in column two next to the corresponding accomplishment. Use extra paper if necessary in order to fully capture the knowledge skills and abilities that you feel contributed to your accomplishment.

For example, you may have listed something like: “Participating in an entrepreneurial team that successfully launched a new product” as one of your accomplishments. Further reflection on this particular accomplishment might help you to recognize specific knowledge such as a knowledge of product design software or knowledge of a specific market segment that contributed to your success with this accomplishment. Similarly, skills such as programming skills, or organizational skills and abilities such as the ability to work well within diverse groups or the ability to communicate complex ideas in a simple manner also likely contributed to your success. **WARNING**: If you find yourself listing personality traits or characteristics (when you say "I am passionate, caring, sensitive, outgoing, friendly, etc.") **STOP!!!** You need to be listing your knowledge, skills, and abilities, **NOT** describing your personality.

1. Once you have answered the question about knowledge, skills and abilities for each accomplishment, go back to your list of knowledge skills and abilities for each accomplishment and circle the one or two that you think were most important or had the greatest influence on your success with that particular accomplishment. When you are finished with this step, you will have a list of your most significant accomplishments along with the knowledge skills and abilities that were instrumental to these accomplishments. (Interpretation: All of the knowledge, skills and abilities that you list, but most importantly those that you circled, indicate those areas of knowledge or abilities that you have relied on in the past and may wish to rely on in the future as you strive to accomplish your objectives.)

**Chartering Your Personal Accomplishments with Skills and Abilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Accomplishment** | **Knowledge/Skills/Abilities that contributed to the success of this accomplishment** |
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***Part 3: Developing Themes***

As this point it’s likely that you will have identified several accomplishments that have similar or connected skills, abilities, talents, etc. Take a moment to look at and think about your entire list of accomplishments with their corresponding knowledge and skill sets. This list is representative of your prior knowledge and it is likely that you see overlap, connections, or interesting combinations. Take a moment to make note of these connections or combinations by drawing arrows or making notes in the margins. Having done this, it is now time to categorize your accomplishment areas. There are several ways you might think about this:

* You can use your list of accomplishments as indicators of categories where you think you possess unique experience. For example, you may find a pattern of accomplishments related to communication, social change, physical preparation and endurance, or artistic creativity. Any or each of these could represent a category.
* You can use your list of skills and abilities to point to categories where you may have special understanding of a specific activity or set of activities. For example, if you see that your ability to motivate and encourage others through empowering them and connecting them, your category might be “mentoring.”
* You can use your list of skills and abilities to identify a specific category of knowledge that has been a recurring support for your life’s accomplishments. For example, in looking across all accomplishments and skills/abilities you might note that quantitative, statistical and mathematical knowledge has contributed to multiple accomplishments. Thus your category might be “quantitative acumen”

Using one or all of these guidelines, identify three themes below. Remember, these themes should be representative of who you are based your accomplishments, but more specifically, the knowledge, skills or abilities that have contributed to your accomplishments. Themes should be evident across multiple accomplishments in multiple contexts (work, school, hobbies, family, etc…)

Themes

1. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
2. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
3. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**