

Program Learning Summaries

Meghan Newman

4033420

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Abstract

Selected coursework from the Bachelor of Arts in Business program strengthened several areas of professional development, including supervision, critical thinking, workplace communication, and human resource management. Each course provided practical knowledge that supports leadership, decision-making, employee development, and organizational effectiveness. These learning experiences also connect to future career goals after military retirement, especially roles involving operations leadership, compliance, program analysis, policy review, and process improvement.

Program Experiences and Career Objectives

My business coursework gave structure to leadership skills I have developed through years of hands-on experience. In my current role, I supervise people, balance requirements, develop personnel, solve problems, and help keep daily operations moving. Those responsibilities are familiar to me, but the coursework helped me explain them through concepts that civilian employers recognize, such as supervision, decision-making, communication, employee development, and organizational performance.

A job interview requires more than saying I have led people or managed programs. I need to show how that experience connects to workplace expectations, business functions, and measurable results. Principles of Supervision, Critical Thinking Strategies for Business Decisions, Effective Business Communication, and Human Resource Management each strengthened a skill set I already use in my current position. They helped me better connect practical experience to the type of work I plan to pursue after military retirement, particularly roles involving operations, compliance, policy review, program analysis, and organizational improvement.

The course sections address the knowledge I gained, the objectives I met through coursework, and the ways those skills apply in a professional environment. They connect classroom learning to workplace behaviors an employer could expect from me, including leading teams, evaluating problems, writing clearly, developing employees, and supporting organizational goals.

MGMT101: Principles of Supervision

Principles of Supervision strengthened my understanding of what effective supervision looks like beyond rank, title, or position. Supervising people requires clear expectations, sound judgment, accountability, and a steady approach to developing others. Robbins and Coulter (2021) describe management as a process that includes planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. That framework helped me connect the daily responsibilities of a supervisor to the larger purpose of aligning team performance with organizational goals.

A central takeaway was understanding the supervisor's role as the link between leadership intent and employee performance. I met this objective through coursework that required me to think through

how supervisors communicate priorities, set standards, and follow up on work without micromanaging every detail. In my current position, I often receive guidance that must be turned into clear direction for instructors, students, and staff. That skill matters in any workplace because employees perform better when they understand the purpose, standard, and timeline behind a task.

Goal setting and problem-solving were other important parts of the course. Daft (2022) explains that managers help organizations achieve goals by coordinating resources and guiding people toward desired outcomes. I applied that concept by looking at how supervisors help employees understand priorities, deadlines, and performance standards. In practice, that includes preparing instructors, managing schedules, supporting evaluations, and ensuring training requirements are completed on time. Clear goals reduce guesswork and allow the team to focus energy where it matters most.

Conflict management helped me better understand how supervisors protect morale and productivity. Conflict is not always a sign that something is broken, but unresolved issues can distract the team and erode trust. Through that coursework, I examined how leaders address disagreements early, listen to those involved, and keep the conversation focused on standards rather than personalities. That lesson applies when working through communication gaps, competing priorities, or performance concerns.

Employee development was the most useful aspect of the workforce connection. Supervisors are responsible for more than correcting mistakes. They coach, mentor, document performance, and help employees improve. This course gave academic structure to leadership skills I use when providing feedback, preparing personnel for greater responsibility, and building confidence across the team. MGMT101 demonstrates my understanding of supervision as a balance among people, processes, and performance. The course helped me connect daily leadership actions to broader workplace expectations, especially in areas such as feedback, accountability, team development, and goal alignment.

BUSN410: Critical Thinking Strategies for Business Decisions

Critical Thinking Strategies for Business Decisions was one of the most valuable courses for my professional growth because it strengthened my ability to evaluate problems, question assumptions, and

make recommendations. Leaders often feel pressure to react quickly when something appears wrong, but speed does not always equal quality. Browne and Keeley (2023) emphasize the importance of asking strong questions before accepting a conclusion. That approach helped me slow down, test the information in front of me, and avoid treating the first explanation as the correct one.

One of the most valuable skills I practiced was defining the problem before choosing a solution. Discussions and assignments required me to separate symptoms from root causes before deciding what action made sense. A missed deadline may appear to be poor individual performance, but the real issue could be unclear guidance, limited resources, competing requirements, or a communication breakdown. In my current role, this skill helps me avoid knee-jerk reactions and identify the root cause before acting.

Evaluating information was another essential part of the course. Not every source, opinion, or data point should carry the same weight. I practiced looking at whether information was reliable, relevant, complete, and useful before using it to support a decision. This skill connects directly to future roles in compliance, inspections, and program analysis, where findings and recommendations must be grounded in facts rather than assumptions.

The course pushed me to recognize bias and assumptions in decision-making. Experience is valuable, but it can create blind spots when leaders rely too heavily on what has worked before. Through coursework, I became more deliberate about considering different perspectives and asking whether my initial reaction was supported by evidence. That habit helps me review issues involving curriculum changes, instructor development, scheduling, and performance concerns with better judgment.

Decision-making also requires thinking beyond the immediate fix. Robbins and Coulter (2021) note that managers make decisions while considering organizational goals, constraints, and consequences. I met this objective by examining how stakeholders, risk, resources, implementation, and second-order effects influence the quality of a recommendation. BUSN410 strengthened the type of judgment employers need in roles that require analysis, compliance, inspections, or program review. The course demonstrates my ability to evaluate information, ask better questions, and make practical recommendations rather than reacting only to surface-level issues.

ENGL226: Effective Business Communication

Effective Business Communication strengthened one of the most important skills I use in a professional setting. Communication affects how expectations are understood, how decisions are carried out, and how credibility is built. Bovée and Thill (2024) explain that effective business messages depend on purpose, audience awareness, clarity, and organization. That directly connects to my current work because a message lacking structure or purpose can create confusion, slow down decision-making, or cause people to miss important information.

Audience awareness became one of the most practical skills I strengthened in the course. Assignments gave me practice shaping messages around the audience, the information they needed, and the action they were expected to take. A message to senior leadership should be concise and decision-focused, while communication with staff may need more context, background, and direction. In my current position, I regularly communicate with different audiences, so I cannot rely on a one-size-fits-all approach.

Organization was another area of growth. Strong workplace writing should make the purpose clear early, provide enough detail to support understanding, and identify the required action. I applied this through assignments focused on business messages and professional correspondence. That skill carries over to emails, evaluations, recommendations, counseling documents, and staff communication. Clear writing saves time and helps people act without having to chase down missing context.

Professional tone became a practical takeaway rather than a writing rule. Leaders often need to be direct, but direct communication should remain respectful and controlled. Tone influences whether a message creates cooperation or defensiveness. This course helped me refine how I address concerns, provide direction, and communicate expectations while maintaining professionalism.

Workplace writing should support action, not just sound polished. I met this objective by preparing communications that helped readers understand, respond, decide, or act. That skill is especially important for future roles in operations, compliance, policy review, or program analysis, where written findings and recommendations must be easy to follow. ENGL226 supports one of the most transferable

skills I can bring to a civilian workplace: clear, professional communication. The course strengthened my ability to write with purpose, organize information for readers, and produce messages that help people understand expectations and act.

HRMT407: Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management helped me view people management from a broader organizational perspective. Leadership experience taught me the importance of developing people, setting expectations, and holding standards. This course connected those responsibilities to human resource functions such as staffing, training, performance management, workplace fairness, and retention. Noe (2023) explains that employee development should improve both individual capability and organizational performance. That idea closely aligns with the work I do in developing instructors and supporting professional growth.

A stronger understanding of human resource practices helped me see how staffing, training, evaluation, and retention directly support organizational goals. Coursework connected HR concepts to practical workplace situations where the right person, with the right preparation, can improve team effectiveness. People are not separate from the mission. The way an organization selects, trains, evaluates, and retains employees directly affects performance and credibility.

Staffing and placement helped me think more carefully about how organizations match people to responsibilities. Filling a vacancy is not the same as placing the right person in the right role. Leaders must consider experience, potential, strengths, limitations, and mission needs. In my current work, assigning responsibilities to instructors or staff requires that same judgment. Someone may be capable of a task but still need coaching, oversight, or time to build confidence.

Training and development were especially relevant to my current role. I met this objective by examining how structured preparation, feedback, and follow-through improve performance. Training should build capability rather than serve as a check-the-box requirement. When development is treated seriously, it improves confidence, consistency, and long-term team readiness.

Performance management tied the course directly to workforce application. Aguinis (2023) explains that performance management is a continuous process that connects employee performance with organizational goals. That concept applies to instructor certifications, student performance, counseling, and daily mentorship. Fair evaluations, documentation, and timely feedback help people understand where they stand and how to improve. HRMT407 reinforced my belief that people are not just resources on a spreadsheet. They are the driving force behind organizational performance, and leaders need to manage them with fairness, structure, and accountability.

Conclusion

The four selected courses show how my business education supports my current responsibilities and future career objectives. MGMT101 strengthened my understanding of supervision, employee development, and performance expectations. BUSN410 improved the way I define problems, evaluate information, and make sound recommendations. ENGL226 sharpened my ability to communicate with purpose, audience awareness, and professional tone. HRMT407 expanded my understanding of staffing, training, performance management, and workplace fairness.

These courses help translate my military experience into business concepts that employers can recognize. They support the roles I plan to pursue after military retirement, especially positions involving operations leadership, compliance, inspections, program analysis, policy review, and process improvement. More importantly, they show how I can apply that knowledge in practical settings where leaders must manage people, evaluate problems, communicate clearly, and improve organizational performance.

References

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