Critical Reflection

In this evaluation I will reflect on my time spent at university throughout the three years and talk about how in addition to the way my technical ability has progressed into level six, how the course has improved my personal skills in preparation for the industry ahead. I will discuss the professional interviews in order to understand how I can increase my chances of employability and improve my performance at interviews in the future. I will reflect upon the promotional material and social media platforms that I have created and discuss how this will influence the path I chose to follow in my career as a hair and make-up artist. I will talk about how work experience out of university has influenced my area of interest and specialism, another influential part of the course and progression from level four is collaboration as gathering a creative network or ‘black book’ will be extremely beneficial for future work. All of these aspects will fundamentally inform my career decisions and allow me to create personal goals to achieve in the years following graduation. My future intentions will be indicated through a professional development plan at the end of this critical reflection.

In the final stages of completing a degree in Make-up for Media and Performance and reflecting back on how it all began I have no doubt I have changed both as a person and as a make-up artist. I was eighteen when starting university in 2013 and although I wanted to be a make-up artist for a few years prior to applying for the course I only had basic technical ability when I joined. I was too inexperienced to go straight into the industry however I knew that eventually with more education I could achieve my goal of becoming a professional make-up artist. When joining level four I was sure that eventually I would later pursue a career in prosthetics, I have however dipped into various specialist areas whilst at university and ultimately have decided in level six that although I enjoy all aspects of the course I am perhaps more suited to hair and make-up for fashion along with wig making since it is what I enjoy the most.

I have never been very outspoken or loud and I am still a reserved and quiet person however I do now have the ability to talk confidently to models I work on and people I work with in a creative team. At the beginning of university I was very cautious of being an annoyance or being in the way on a photoshoot or set where as I now understand the importance of becoming fully involved, giving input when necessary and overall focusing mostly on communicating well within that team. I am no longer wary or cautious of working on people I have never met before and instead I work quickly and efficiently to achieve what I set out to create. This is mainly because of my involvement in work experience whilst at university, I stayed away from involvement in work outside of university in first and second year mainly because of confidence issues. Mid way through level five I realised I was really lacking the experience and began to play catch up by putting myself out of my comfort zone in order to conquer these fears and gain valuable experience. I have worked with some great photographers, stylists and models within the past year that I will continue to work with and will remain as trusted and reliable contacts as I progress into the industry.

Social media is now rapidly becoming the best way to promote yourself and your work to others in the industry in order to get recognised. I frequently post on Instagram and have two accounts, the first a personal account linked to fashion and influenced by the role I am in at clothing brand River Island, and a second account purely for make-up and hair. The second account is my professional Instagram that I share with creative contacts. It is also an important and great way to see what other people in the industry are creating and working on, it allows me to keep up to date and also inspires me to push creative boundaries with my own work. Within the next year I aim to really push my social media platform further, I intend to start a YouTube channel where I can blog about new products, film make-up and hair tutorials and then further promote on Instagram and Pinterest.

I also believe the more time and effort I spend promoting my work, putting myself out there and continuing to learn and try new things after graduation the more it will help conquer any self-confidence issues. I have always been driven, coming from a low income household and the first in my family to ever go to university I did feel an immense amount of pressure to be successful from the start. This does however push me to never give up on my goals and my dreams and follow any opportunity that arises. One of my biggest flaws and setbacks is my self-confidence and the perception I have of myself and of my own work that is mainly caused by anxiety. Although sometimes it can be a good thing to be critical of your own work because it does push you to improve and aim for a higher standard, the inability to recognise positive aspects can hold me back enormously.

Since the professional interviews I have been working very hard to find alternative ways to control my confidence and anxiety levels in order to prevent it from effecting any job interview in the future. The professional interview for me went much worse than I had anticipated as I allowed my anxiety to take over and became very self-critical. I have however learnt so much about myself from the experience and it has allowed me to focus on how I can improve it. I have read a couple of books about the subject since called The Confidence Code by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman and The Life Changing Magic of Not Giving a F\*\*k by Sarah Knight and they both talk about how to train yourself to think more positively, not overthink situations, be the best you can be, and overcome any stressful situation you may be in.

During university I have achieved consistently good grades however I did not mention any of those achievements once in my interview. I am quite modest and I never want to come across as arrogant but I do realise having watched the interview back that I need to make the interviewer more aware of my employability and skill base through talking about positive achievements. I think the familiarity I had with the panel members almost stopped me from mentioning the grades I have achieved and the personal skills I have because they already know about those things, however I should have completely ignored that and pitched myself as I would to a stranger as the same situation could happen in the future and I must never assume they know what I do not say. I did not engage in much eye contact with the panel which was commented on in the feedback sheets as I talked to my laptop too much during the interview, this is again because of confidence issues and I should not fear being judged. Although I am always punctual, always early for everything and wear a watch every day I should not have worn a watch during the interview. Every time my anxiety started to become intense I fiddled around with my watch and it became very distracting to watch back in the video, in future unless I know I can completely control my anxiety I will not be wearing any jewellery to prevent this from happening.

Watching the video back I became very frustrated with the way I shut down when Jenny was questioning me, I should have remained calm and instead of panicking too much and causing myself a complete mind blank I should have been replying with the knowledge I know I have about the industry and hair stylists I follow every single day on social media. I received feedback about the quality of images in my portfolio as some of them brought the appearance down, I have since re organised and re-evaluated the images I am using in my portfolio. I have also decided to present my portfolio in a book with a company that guarantees high quality printing. The book will be ready for post-graduation and for future interviews. Despite the disappointing interview I did receive great feedback about my promotional material and branding, my logo is simple but professional and I believe my CV, business cards and website reflect my personality and link together very well.

To conclude my journey I have realised that I should be proud of my achievements so far and allow my passion for the profession to come across in future interview situations. I have learnt so much during the time I have spent at university and more than ever before I have faith that I will achieve the future I have dreamed about for a long time. Level six has given me a springboard insight into the industry and shown me an understanding of what I must do in order to get my foot through the door and ultimately achieve all the things in my ten year professional development plan.

Word Count: 1587