

## SEAL examples

### Example 1: Summer Research experience

**SITUATION:** What happened?

*While undertaking a research project as part of the summer research program, I was assigned the task of conducting phone surveys for data collection. I hadn't done anything like this before so I found it challenging to initiate the calls and speak to people over the phone to ensure that I was obtaining the information I needed.*

**EFFECT:** What were the new experiences or challenges you faced?

*I felt very nervous about making the calls and wasn't convinced I would do a good job. I needed a way to deal with my nerves and address the problem I was having with knowing what to say and when.*

**ACTION:** What action did you take or strategies did you employ to deal with the new experiences/ challenges?

*I realised that my nerves would not be kept in check if I didn't have something to guide my conversations with the research participants and I needed something to refer to when speaking to people. So, I devised a script that I could use to prompt the things I needed to ask the research participants.*

**LEARNING:** What did you learn from it - what can you now do as a result and what do you need to do handle a similar situation again in the future?

*I learned that I sometimes have problems with nerves when communicating in stressful situations and that planning out what I am going to say and trying to anticipate responses helps me settle those nerves and feel more confident about communicating effectively and professionally. I would use this strategy again in the future when preparing for important meetings or presentations*

## Example 2: Mentoring experience

**SITUATION:** What happened?

*One of the first things that I found really challenging was making that first face to face contact with my mentor. From the information that I had been provided I knew that he was quite senior in a large organisation and I assumed that he was busy and important.*

**EFFECT:** What were the new experiences or challenges you faced?

*I was worried that spending time with me would be annoying and time-consuming for him. I was also worried I would seem immature or say something stupid. I felt really intimidated before I had even met him. I knew that I really wanted to make the most of this experience, and to do that I knew I would have to push through these nerves.*

**ACTION:** What action did you take or strategies did you employ to deal with the new experiences/ challenges?

*To help with this, I spent several hours in the days leading up to the meeting finding out about the company that he works for, and about the role that he has. This made me feel like I could at least talk about what he did without sounding ignorant. I thought really hard about what I wanted to get out of the mentoring relationship and typed these expectations up so that I could take them with me to the meeting and talk about them with my mentor. I was also worried that we would have nothing in common so I looked at his LinkedIn profile to see if it could give me any clues on small talk options.*

*By the time the day came to meet up I was definitely still a bit nervous but I knew that I had prepared as best I could. I felt as long as I was respectful and polite it couldn't go too badly. The meeting went far better than I could have expected. My mentor straight away told me how much he was looking forward to talking about his career journey with someone who was travelling a similar pathway. It turned out that we did have things in common to talk about but my mentor was really impressed with my notes regarding my expectations and admitted that this would make it much easier for him to provide appropriate advice and support.*

**LEARNING:** What did you learn from it - what can you now do as a result and what do you need to do handle a similar situation again in the future?

*Through this experience I realized that by spending time preparing I could really start to control my nerves in this kind of situation. I also discovered that being prepared also makes it easier for the people that you are working with to collaborate with you. You have everything you need already there. Because of the type of preparation that I did, I also feel that I developed my research skills, which will be helpful not only in my classes but also when I am preparing for interviews.*

*By considering my expectations for the mentoring experience I believe I was demonstrating self-awareness and critical thinking, and showing initiative by having these ready for my first meeting with my mentor.*

*I feel that this experience has really boosted my self-confidence and I am sure that in situations where I feel intimidated I will try to use these strategies again.*

### **Example 3: Placement**

**SITUATION:** What happened?

*As part of my placement I was required to present my proposal to the General Manager of the company. This person is known for being somewhat pro-money/anti-environment and this was very confronting for me as I was essentially presenting the entirety of all the environmental work I had done for the company at the time and without approval, my work would have been useless.*

**EFFECT:** What were the new experiences or challenges you faced?

*Before the meeting, I felt very small, as though I was just a university student here on a placement to make some friends and learn some new things. Yet, there I was sitting in a room waiting for five minutes time of a person who was slightly agitated, stressed and flying out of state that afternoon.*

**ACTION:** What action did you take or strategies did you employ to deal with the new experiences/ challenges?

*In the emotionally charged situation, I pushed through my nerves and responded to the situation in an extremely professional way, speeding up my presentation while remaining composed, highlighting the key points and continuing to engage with him at every step. My two supervisors were trying to get words in here and there, however he continued to engage only with me. I had captured the attention of the GM which was very rewarding for me. Due to my thorough research, I had an answer to every question he posed to me and this left him openly impressed with my efforts. He proceeded to give approval to my proposal and my training documents which gave me a sense of accomplishment and professionalism.*

**LEARNING:** What did you learn from it - what can you now do as a result and what do you need to do handle a similar situation again in the future?

*Throughout that experience I learnt that I am a very capable presenter and that I am able to be thrown into the deep end as such and flourish into a position I didn't know I could fill. I feel as though this example is the most extreme of these circumstances, however, I was met with this situation to a lesser degree throughout the duration of my placement with lower level managers and supervisors.*

*I have enjoyed being challenged as I have gained a great deal of experience in creating presentations and being persuasive with the language and tools that I use to gain outcomes. When I came into this placement, this was very much a skillset that I wished to develop. However, one aspect of this that I still wish to continue working on is to remove the emotionally charged nerves that I feel when I am about to present. I feel as though this could give wrong impressions or make me appear as though I am not as prepared as I in fact am. In future situations I will aim to react in a more calm and relaxed manner prior to delivering my presentations as I believe this will add value to my working life further down the track.*