Reflective Essay

I worked as a gaffer on the short film "The Dancer." This was my first experience with this role; I'll arrange the project's development into seven sections.

My Role:

As the gaffer, I was responsible for managing lights and electrical equipment under the direction of the DOP. I had to figure out how to position the lights during production and how to quickly switch lighting settings between takes.

The Beginning:

On my first day of university, I was extremely ill, which made it challenging for me to present my initial film concept and prompted me to leave early. I felt a connection to one of the film projects and wanted to be a part of it. After talking to the director about it, it appeared like they didn't want me to be a part of it, and no one else I asked had room for a crew.
My relationships with the majority of the students in my class have been strained since the previous academic year. This prevented me from collaborating on projects and the course.
After getting support from my teacher and finding a really great crew to work with, I started to get to know my peers and settle into the responsibilities of my role.
In order to work on future projects with my crew, establish a strong relationship with them, and treat my crew like family, I really wanted to get to know them better. I was able to become good friends with a couple of them, which helps me not feel so lonely when I'm on campus now.

Workshops:

Attending workshops was crucial because I learned more about how essential lighting is in production and got to play around with the lights and camera.
During our workshops, we watched a video of cinematographer Newton Thomas Sigel explaining the three different camera lenses—wide, regular, and wide-angle. I gained knowledge of the f-stop aperture scale as well as the importance of the angle of view in enhancing the storyline, the theme, and the overall mood of the film.
I had the opportunity to use the Nanlite Forza 60B LED Kit, Blackmagic Camera, and Blackmagic Video Assist in those workshops. It was incredibly fascinating and helpful that we could watch the film while we were filming. When experimenting with

Nanlite, the special effects, effects controls, brightness, colour temperature, and speed control are the most interesting features.

Film Days:

Filming took place over two days. On the first day, we filmed the dancer performing in front of the green screen in the G12 Film Studio.
I had the opportunity to use the controls and adjust the brightness with the control switches. I had to simultaneously change the brightness on all the lights we were using. It was extremely great working with everyone, and after the shoot, we ended up using the green screen and studio lighting to do both individual and group photos.
On the second day of filming outside the campus library, I had to watch the lights closely to ensure they didn't fall, as they were in a fixed position on top of a cardboard box.
I was too sick to stay for the rest of the shoot. I spoke with the director and requested permission to return home since I was too ill to stay. My group was very kind in allowing me to go home and recover.
I knew that because the lights were fixed, my absence would have no effect on production. If I hadn't gone home early, the severity of my illness and the weather would have forced me to spend the next few days in the hospital. Instead, I had time to recover and felt much better, which is why I don't regret my decision to go home.

Mental Health:

Recently, my mental health had taken a toll on me. I have a lot of personal issues that are affecting me, in addition to the negative impact being surrounded by other students has had on my mental health. I used to find it challenging to be around everyone at university, but I'm beginning to feel okay being there. I missed a few workshops as a result of this, and sometimes I arrived late because I overslept and missed my train. I needed to make up for missing the electrical safety workshop.
My job is related to my film career, and while it was challenging to juggle both, I eventually managed to get the hang of it. Now that I know that work won't interfere with future projects, I can only hope that my mental health will be much better by then. I occasionally struggle to manage my stress, anxiety, or sadness. It was occasionally quite difficult for me because I had to use the restroom during workshops or lunch breaks to hide my sobbing.

Conclusion:

Ultimately, I recognized that my role as a gaffer required me to work alongside the DoP to bring the overall aesthetic of the film to life by making and controlling light, as

well as comprehending the intended light effects and deciding how best to produce them.
In addition to what I learned in class, I now know that I should have spent more of my personal time watching videos on how to use light and how various gaffers use it. In the future, if I am a gaffer in a production again, I will make sure to be more prepared. Fortunately, this time it didn't affect our film because I knew what I was doing. However, I do believe that it's always better to know more, and I think that's where I fell short and need to improve: by doing more research outside of class.