

Zander Letter – Masuk Ali

Date 31st July 2024

Dear Laura James, I achieved a First-Class BA Honours in Developing Leadership and Management. As I look back on my journey (Naiman, 2022) on attaining a 1st Class degree, it was exceedingly difficult at times, stressful and challenging but I learnt with time how to manage skills along the way to achieve my goal. Ultimately, to reach the target of completing the degree motivated me to carry on. I have picked many skills which have been valuable to me now such as writing academic documents, creating spreadsheets, and reading balance sheets for the finance side of businesses and creating websites which has given me plenty of self-belief for future job opportunities. During my journey in completing my degree, one of the biggest challenges faced was balancing work, family lifestyle and accommodate time to complete my assessments with knowledge and understanding to ensure the work was of quality.

I was met with plenty of bumpy roads along my way and the global pandemic did not make it any easier as not being allowed outdoors and being taught modules online and getting used to Microsoft Teams was alien to me but with weekly lessons and help from my tutors, I got a grasp of the platform and grew confidence. By communicating with classmates made me realise we were all in the same boat regarding online learning. I did get plenty of support from my wife who pushed me to achieve my goal. At the start of the course, I set my goals to take it step by step to complete the first stage of the course which was completing the CertHE and then moving on the BA. I was incredibly nervous when I handed in my first assessment as I did not know what mark to expect as I thought I did it all wrong. I was embarrassed at the start to ask my tutors for help thinking they will think I am uneducated (Campillo, 2021) and what am I doing on the course from my previous experience in school which made me feel like I do not belong at university but in hindsight, conversations with university tutors and feedback on my work had gained me more confidence and thankfully, I now think there are major benefits in adult learning.

I felt as though I did grow into university life as I had taken a 20-year break in studying since my late teens where I lost my father at fifteen and then my mother at nineteen so secondary and higher education was heavily affected by my mental wellbeing. I had started my family young and had my son at 22 so to

have a second chance to achieve a BA I ensured not to give up on education and I used the life skills I had acquired to continuously learn and work hard to improve myself. I always try and stay positive with my faith that it is never too late, and I persevered on to proving to be a role model to my kids and demonstrated hard work pays off as well as to set an example to them.

On my graduation day in the summer which was a lovely day in the setting of the Swansea Arena overlooking the sea was an amazing venue. My nerves started to kick in as I made my way to the hall as I never thought I would ever be wearing a cap and gown or graduating after leaving college all those years ago. In all honesty the ceremony was a very bittersweet moment, the joy of my wife and my kids seeing me graduating took my breath away but as I walked to the stage to receive my BA I had a moment thinking only if my parents had lived to witness what I had achieved, their lifelong dream but I do hope I have made them proud (Garaventa, 2016) as much as my family are.

Reference List

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Garaventa, K. (2016) *Benjamin Zander- Give yourself an A* [video]. Available at: [Benjamin Zander- Give Yourself an A - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kd8Z8Z8Z8Z8). (Accessed 15th Feb 2023).

Naiman, L. (2022) *Transform Your Professional and Personal Life with the Art of Possibility*. Available at: [Transform Your Professional and Personal Life with the Art of Possibility | Creativity at Work](https://www.creativityatwork.com/transform-your-professional-and-personal-life-with-the-art-of-possibility/). (Accessed 15th Feb 2023).