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BMSW4001: ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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1. Introduction

By reflecting on our experiences, we can learn a lot about ourselves, what we are good at, what we like and what we can do more in order to become even more successful than what we are now. Everything happens because of the implementations we are focusing on whilst reflecting on our experiences (Robinson, J.P., 2000). The purpose of this report will be to provide my personal reflection on this module and furthermore, how it helped me boost my skillset. From my personal view and by analysing academic literature publications, I will discuss my experience throughout the year so far and the skills that I managed to acquire and how they will help me academically and after graduation in the future. I have divided my report on different points, showing the most important skills I had to focus on throughout the year. These I accomplished to develop the most which allowed me to produce higher scores and work efficiency not only in my scholar education but also in my private life and my professional life.

2. Acquired Skills

2.1 Presentation and Public Speaking

The ability to speak in public is really important as it is a tool of indicating creativity, professionalism and can be used as a way of promoting your ideas and excel in job interviews (Gladis, S. 1999). Furthermore, being able to speak in front of public helps to boost the confidence, which in this module I had the opportunity to achieve. I had to prepare a presentation and speak in front of many people and this really influenced my development as I had never spoken in front of a big audience in different language. Insecurity in the language skills can affect for a substandard performance. Yet, I managed to script my presentation and whilst presenting I tried to keep most of the presented similar to what I had already planned it to be. This way I can reassure myself that I won't make any grammar mistakes and can instead concentrate on my presenting and performance. Initially, I was worried if I will be able to prepare well enough and present my findings to the class, but after careful research and preparation I think that my performance was satisfactory. I concentrated my research on different techniques of speaking so that I seem

confident and aware of the topic and the information I am sharing with my public. Coming on as confident is one of the most important features a presenter should have. Stumbling over words whilst talking, continuously walking around or having a pen or papers and passing these from hand to hand are all signals of nervousness and unpreparedness (Flora C, 2009). I tried to focus on avoiding these actions to deliver a more engaging presentation, as the viewers can get distracted by these. Whilst doing my presentation, I familiarised myself with techniques and fundamentals that you should be aware of in order to prepare a good looking and entertaining slides as well. For Example, it was really important to prepare interesting and entertaining opening so that I could keep the audience attention. I also learnt that whilst presenting, I should keep eye contact all the time and never turn back to the people I am speaking to. Involving the audience using entertaining games/questions and showing enthusiasm will also contribute to the overall success of the presentation. Whilst doing the presentation, I also gained a better understanding of how to use Microsoft PowerPoint. I learnt how to include animations in the slides in order to make it more creative and entertaining, how to make collages so that I can fit more images on a single slide, how to make brochures and flyers so that I can give some to my colleagues before I start presenting at class and also how to make mind so that I can use them in every lecture and seminar in order to keep my writings neat and in order.

2.2 Time Management

In my current academic year, I came to realise that time management is one of the key features in order for myself to be successful and work in harmony and peace without stressing too much over

	Immediate	Not Immediate
Critical	Critical and immediate	Critical but not Immediate
Not Critical	Not Critical but Immediate	Uncategorized

unnecessary tasks. In order to improve my efficiency, I used the ‘Eisenhower Matrix’ which allowed me to customise my tasks from most important to least important.

The “Eisenhower Matrix” also helped me sort which tasks require immediate attention and which are not that critical and I can avoid as it is not much of an importance to my work. For instance, I started doing a “to-do list” and from the list I allocated each item to one of the 4 quadrants. By doing so, I no longer had to choose where to start from and what to do next as everything is prioritised. The Eisenhower method helped me not only with my task prioritization but also clearing my schedule and feeling more energetic. Sometimes, trying to beat the deadline was a hard task and brought a lot of stress as I was not sure whether I will manage to finish everything on time. But improving my management skills helped me spread my workday flow into small tasks and plan the time required to be executed. After that it was easier to do a rearrangement in order to minimize the stress. Overall, the improvement in this particular skill helped me achieve my targets faster and inspired me to get things done by working less but effectively.

2.3 Gathering Relative Information

Another topic I would like to discuss is “Information gathering” and how during this module it helped me improve my skill set and become more productive. To be more specific, I am going to concentrate on the “note-taking” process. As stated by Peterson (1982) “note-taking will help with organising the ideas that you have”. At the beginning of the academic year I found it slightly harder to write down neatly and precisely everything that was being taught during my lectures and seminars. All the information that my lecturers were providing me with was valuable but I struggled with writing down everything and thus, some of the time I could not keep up with what they were talking about and at the end I had useful notes but at the same time was missing a lot of information where I was not able to concentrate well enough. However, this module helped me correct my mistakes and turn them into a valuable asset. I also received recommendations from fellow classmates, who also struggled to keep up with the pace of the class, to get myself a digital voice recorder, of course after politely asking my lecturers if we were indeed allowed to use them in class. However, instead, I was trying to improve my personal note-taking skills and

how I concentrate in class and how I perceive information, so I started listening very carefully what my teachers were discussing and at the end of each slide I was summarising all the great ideas and information I found useful. After lectures, I usually tried to retype my notes on my computer to repeat all the information I have learnt and written down and also have it across my electronic devices for easier access. Thus, I managed to save myself time, extend my attention span and structure my notes neatly so that I can understand what I wrote and all the ideas that were mentioned and of course my concentration and pace. I have also learnt to use shortcuts such as abbreviations, using symbols in order to replace words, creating visual diagrams which represent different ideas, using different pen colours to write down facts, examples and pieces of evidence. By improving this skill, now I definitely feel more self-confident. Combined with the time management skill I will no longer have to work under stress and will be able to plan my tasks on time.

2.4 CV Writing

Writing an actual structured CV was a new experience for me during this module and it was the first time that I actually sat and seriously thought about my current situation, what my goals are and what measures I am going to take in order to fulfil my aspirations. I have learnt some really valuable lessons whilst preparing for my CV. For example, I have been taught some keywords and statements that I should be including as this is important for employers to see in my resume. I also learnt how to present myself on paper which really boosted my confidence because I think that making first good impression is really important and this is exactly how I can achieve it by having a good looking and up to date CV. Another thing I learnt for the future, is to make sure I am constantly updating my CV with every skill or achievement I have acquired in order to boost my chances of success when seeking for a job. Of course, writing a presentable and copious CV was not an easy task so I had to educate myself further on style, what needs to be included and further information. I first started by drawing a table with four columns on a sheet of paper. The first column included my education levels and previous educational institutions. The second column included my previous employers and what positions I have had there. The third column included all of my personality features like “communicative” and “ability to take criticism and learn” and the last column was

simply filled with notes I had taken on how to prepare the CV, which templates to look for and more useful information.

3. Conclusion

To summarise everything I have said so far, I think that having the opportunity to attend the “Academic and Employability skills” module this year has been a very rewarding and vital experience to me as it showed me which skills needed further development and moreover, it taught me new things that I did not know and how to apply them in my character so that I become a better version of myself and never stop improving. What is more, the time I spent with my colleagues and teachers during both terms taught me how to work in a team, how to distribute tasks, how to cooperate on a professional level and complete tasks within the given time frame. I also acquired new software skills with PowerPoint which will enable me to deliver more precise presentations in the future. These new features will be useful for any future development and work, teamwork or employment. I am thankful for every opportunity that has been granted to me and by attending this module I managed to boost my self-confidence together with the ability to speak in front of an audience, learn how to distribute my time and manage it effectively so I can fulfil maximum tasks and also last but not least, I learned the process of gathering information and applying it to my course works and lectures. I have also learnt to write a copious and presentable CV which will help me in my future employment. My reflection on everything that has been discussed for the future is that in order to achieve my goals, I have to keep mastering all of my skillsets and try to push myself out of my comfort zone and keep improving all the time because this is the only way of making my dreams come true. Overall, I am very pleased with this module and the content that has been taught throughout the year, but moreover the help I have received to keep up with the teaching, hence how I later on realised to be very efficient and precise.

4. References

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