

## ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS REFLECTIVE REPORT

|                 |                                            |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------|
| STUDENT NAME    | ANAMARIA RICEA                             |
| STUDDENT ID     | 1910022                                    |
| LECTURER NAME   | BARBARA CHINYANI<br>AND<br>LLOYD BAHARRY   |
| UNIVERSITY NAME | UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY<br>SAINT DAVID |
| MODULE CODE     | BMSW4001_LON                               |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| <u>INTRODUCTION</u> | <u>3</u>  |
| <u>DESCRIPTION</u>  | <u>3</u>  |
| <u>FELINGS</u>      | <u>4</u>  |
| <u>EVALUATION</u>   | <u>4</u>  |
| <u>ANALYSIS</u>     | <u>5</u>  |
| <u>CONCLUSION</u>   | <u>6</u>  |
| <u>ACTION PLAN</u>  | <u>6</u>  |
| <u>REFERENCE</u>    | <u>9</u>  |
| <u>APPENDIX 1</u>   | <u>10</u> |
| <u>APPENDIX 2</u>   | <u>12</u> |
| <u>APPENDIX 3</u>   | <u>14</u> |

# ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS REFLECTIVE REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

In the world today, everyone requires academic knowledge to survive. The educational experience allows the students to develop skills that help them within the employability system and future career.

The assessment purpose is to write a reflection about my experience with the academic and employability skills course. This report is the analytical evaluation and observation of the skills and knowledge that I have achieved throughout the first and second term. I will present my overall learning experience during the semesters. Firstly, I will review the five primary skills by describing the knowledge, feelings and personal experience. Secondly, I verify the various aspects that operated poorly or adequately, create an action plan and a SWOT analysis. The skills that I developed significantly are time management, academic writing, curriculum vitae (CV), cover letter and public speaking.

For this paper, I will apply Gibbs (1988) model, Reflective Learning Cycle. According to Gibbs (1988), the model follows six stages, including describing the situation, examining the feelings, assessing the experience, analysis, conclusion, and an action plan.

## DESCRIPTION

During these semesters, the teacher familiarised us with several theories regarding academic and employability skills. In term one, the professor explained the different theories for time management and the importance of academic writing. I expanded my understanding to develop and manage my time. Our lecturer also used the Eisenhower method and 80-20 Rule to explain time management methods and approaches.

Moreover, I got valuable information to strengthen my academic writing. The essential aspects identified covered are paragraph and sentence structure, source analysis, and how to identify valid scholarly sources, peer-reviewed articles and reliable data from websites. I explored the necessary steps in paraphrasing and summarising by practising in-class exercise with the lecturer (Appendix 1 and 2). Through this guideline, I expanded my abilities by learning the Harvard reference style and the importance of referencing.

In term two, we learned how to design and communicate a PowerPoint representation, and methods to improve our presentation skills. The lecturer explained the essential role of body language and how proper behaviour changes the audience's opinion.

I learned the critical elements to consider when I will be designing a curriculum vitae (CV) and write a cover letter (Appendix 2). Furthermore, in term two, I became more familiar with the reflective report, including the structure and steps to apply the Gibbs (1988) model. The model is recognised as a framework for reflection, which supports us to reflect systematically (Oxford Brookes University, 2020).

## FELINGS

According to Cottrell (2013), being a student is a life-changing adventure and way distinctive from the study at previous levels. After finishing high school, I had to work, and when I had the opportunity to apply to university, I did it; to finish my studies was a goal. Starting as a student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, it was a dream come true. However, within a short time, I felt overwhelmed and become confused. We had to discover that learning can be stressful and fundamental at the same time. The hardest part of learning academic and employability skills has been the academic writing and time-management - both powerful and corralled. During the classes, it was required to advance my understanding, considering that English is not my first language.

I realized I have to face some challenges, in particular, recognizing that I am a perfectionist person regarding my education, and this was an additional reason to be more anxious. The first significant challenge has been to develop a new writing style, including vocabulary, grammar, and text structure. In the first weeks, the teacher assured us that explains several academic writing methods and steps towards developing an academic paper. I learned how to paraphrase, summarize and references even though in the beginning, it was a new concept for me.

The second difficulty was to enhance my time management, acknowledging that I have to work and study at the same time. However, I had to improve my independent study time, having more control over the essential deadlines. I start to apply the 80-20 rule (Tracy, 2017) and the Eisenhower matrix (Develop good Habits, 2020) in my study and work activities to avoid procrastination.

I felt less confused, as a result, I was able to evolve. I increased my confidence and motivation; however, in the second semester, I had to face more educational requirements which have worried me, for example, public speaking.

## EVALUATION

Nowadays, individuals need to develop new abilities to handle the workplace environment (Sharma, 2019). During the first and second term, I gained knowledge that will encourage me to

succeed in future projects. Thus, through the lecturer courses, I achieved new levels in my academic experience and a new self-evaluation strategy in learning. Before my educational experience, I struggled with my vocabulary and grammar, and my writing skills been very rusty. However, using the skills I studied, I deepen a better understanding in long term creating new academic habits. Cottrell (2013) argues that developing our writing skills, we can become more aware of what is requires and be more flexible and creative. Therefore, I learned to build paragraphs and sentence structures, and I realize I become passionate about academic writing. Nevertheless, it is still complicated with paraphrasing and summarising. I experience a challenge considering that it is not correct to use someone else work and not to reference.

Universities and colleges offer various opportunities to expand our abilities and pieces of knowledge (Cottrell, 2013). As a student, there will be numerous other demands which disturb us studying. Before university, I tried to apply various approaches to use my time effectively and to be more confident speaking in public. However, starting in higher education, I discovered that my time management and public speaking need significant improvement. Frequently I find myself in situations that my deadline time is almost over, and I did not finish my tasks. Even if I learn how to apply different methods to organize my responsibilities, it demands time to become a new habit.

I have also to recognize that I need to practice my body language and nonverbal communication. These abilities are the foundation in public speaking (Gleeson, 2017).

## ANALYSIS

In previous parts, I focused on the details of my academic experience and the challenges I faced. In the analysis section, I want to verify the different aspects that operated poorly or satisfactorily. On reflection, I realize my academic and employability skills have seriously improved with the guidance of my teachers and colleague's support. I have evolved methods and techniques to improve my writing speed, grammar, and vocabulary. However, I assume the reason why my academic skills progress so well is that I was able to identify my gaps early.

The previous educational levels and my language confidentiality have been reasons why I still have to develop my time management and public speaking. I searched for further pieces of literature to expand my knowledge and to understand the subjects better.

Tracy (2017) argues that identifying the key result in the area of our activities, we can see what is holding us back. Is better not to justify, rationalize, or defend our weaknesses. As individuals, we avoid jobs where we have struggled in the past. According to Tracy (2017), we need to identify the cores tasks in our activities, applying the "Law of Three" and organize them by priority. However, to avoid procrastination, we need to stay motivated and optimistic.

Understanding why my time management did not work before and how I can improve it in the future, I continue with my research to study more about public speaking. According to Kleiser (2006), to become a successful speaker, we need to study the methods used by other distinguished speakers, for example, Roosevelt. Afterwards, we need to develop the habit of repetition and self-confidence.

Therefore, I believe a reflective and self-evaluation approach will aid my learning academic and employability skills. However, I think everyone learns in their way and takes time to create new routines. I enjoy finding out new things.

## CONCLUSION

Sharma (2019) argue that in the industries requirements without communication or soft skills is hard to succeed. Above, I analysed my experience with academic and employability skills course, including academic writing, time management, curriculum vitae and public speaking. I enhanced my abilities in time management, and I can apply new techniques and strategies in my daily projects. Since I learned why it is crucial to manage your time and to become more result-oriented, I was capable of avoiding procrastinating.

Moreover, I consider I have formed adequate skills in academic writing. Academically, I can use the vocabulary and grammar properly, though at the beginning of this course, I was confused, and I felt anxious I develop the body paragraphs, referencing and sentence structure.

Academic learning within higher education level generally focused on the accomplishments of individuals. However, this ensures that each person is knowledgeable of their strengths and weaknesses (Cottrell, 2013). I consider that my vulnerabilities can become an ability if I will focus daily by expanding my pieces of knowledge.

Lastly, I learned how overwhelming higher education was and how hard I adapted to new circumstances. A perfectionist personality can create multiple difficulties and barriers to the achievement of goals. However, I believe without academic study, the employment list is limited.

## ACTION PLAN

Managing our learning is not straightforward. It requires a variety of personal skills and attributes to accomplish independent learning. However, in Table 1, I create my SOWT analysis to determine my strengths and weaknesses and identify potential opportunities or threats. The SWOT analysis is the most reliable way to understand our accomplishments and then to create an action plan (Table2 ).

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I have excellent communication skills as working in hospitality for four years.</li> <li>- I developed my academic writing and English language.</li> <li>- I have social and relationship skills.</li> <li>- I can handle conflicts.</li> <li>- I am skilful with PowerPoint design.</li> <li>- I am confident to work in a team.</li> </ul> | <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My time management needs improvements.</li> <li>- I do not have professional work experience.</li> <li>- I am not confident about my public speaking skills.</li> <li>- I still need to improve my employability skills.</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often, I am volunteering, which allows me to improve my employability skills.</li> <li>- I will change my workplace or do an internship to gain more knowledge.</li> <li>- I will continue my studies, and I will do the PhD.</li> </ul>                                                                                                  | <p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- London is an expensive city; thus, I need to take into consideration many factors before starting something.</li> <li>- If I do not manage my time, probably, I will not be able to achieve my goals.</li> <li>- If I do not start to be more confident, I will not enhance my presentation skills.</li> </ul> |

Table 1, Personal SWOT Analysis.

My time management needs improvement, and to attain this, I will be more systematic with my time, I will priorities and plan my essential activities. Finally, I will apply new time management techniques to find out which one is working best. For example, I will create a planner with things I have to do. Every day we are involved in positions to plan and make decisions. Planning our time is crucial, to set priorities and to avoid stress. However, I desire to become more organised, to get exercise to manage my anxiety and study how to be more confident in public.

To improve strategies for my public speaking skill, I will have to learn how to address pieces of information for different audiences, how to deal with questions and answers session and how to deal with the robust public. I aim to enhance the skill, and I will take further courses regarding public speaking. Moreover, in my free time, I will read more about personal developments, public speaking, study abilities and employability skills.

|                  | JOB NAME:<br>PSYCHOLOGIST                      | HOW                              | HOW LONG    | OBSTACLES                                                          |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SKILLS I<br>NEED | Public speaking<br>and presentation<br>skills. | Online and<br>offline<br>course. | Two months. | University and<br>Work<br>responsibilities.                        |
| SKILLS I<br>NEED | Time management                                | Online<br>course.                | One month.  | University and<br>Work<br>responsibilities.                        |
| SKILLS I<br>NEED | EMOTIONAL<br>INTELLIGENCE                      | Online and<br>offline<br>course. | One year.   | University and<br>Work<br>responsibilities,<br>or<br>unemployment. |

Table2, Personal action plan.

## REFERENCE

- Cottrell, S. (2013) *The study skills handbook*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Develop good Habits (2020) *The Eisenhower Matrix: Make Urgent vs. Important Decisions with 4 Quadrants* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.developgoodhabits.com/eisenhower-matrix/> (Accessed: 13 April 2020).
- Gibbs, G. (1998) *Learning by doing* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/396189261/Learning-by-Doing-Graham-Gibbs> (Accessed: 03 April 2020).
- Gleeson, B. (2017) *20 Tips for mastering the art of public speaking* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.inc.com/brent-gleeson/20-tips-for-mastering-art-of-public-speaking.html> (Accessed: 17 April 2020).
- Kleiser, G. (2006) *Successful methods pf public speaking* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/read/187094194/Successful-Methods-of-Public-Speaking> (Accessed:20 April 2020).
- Oxford Brookes University (2020) *Reflective writing: About Gibbs reflective cycle* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/upgrade/study-skills/reflective-writing-gibbs/> (Accessed: 15 April 2020).
- Sharma, P. (2019) *Soft Skills – personality development for life success*. 2th Ed. New Delhi: BPB Publications [Online]. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/read/414282055/Soft-Skills-Personality-Development-for-Life-Success> (Accessed: 13 April 2020).
- Tracy, B (2017) *Eat that frog! Action workbook* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/read/354008499/Eat-That-Frog-Action-Workbook-21-Great-Ways-to-Stop-Procrastinating-and-Get-More-Done-in-Less-Time> (Accessed: 13 April 2020).

## APPENDIX 1



### Academic and Employability Skills (ACE) – term 1 BMSW4001 (GT) In-class exercise 2: Summarising (Oct 2019)

Student Name: Amamakeia Ricea Student ID/Group: 1910022

Time allocated: 1 hour. Please return your paper to the lecturer upon completion. It will be returned to you at the next session. You will need to include a scanned copy of this exercise in the form of an appendix together with your Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

#### Ex.1

Read the following text and make notes on the main ideas. You can do this on a separate piece of paper which you do not have to hand in.

#### To be a great leader, you need to start by leading yourself

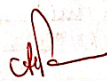
Most people go into top positions with good intentions, but those often crumble due to the demands — and perks — of the job. If you want to succeed, devote some time and energy to self-leadership, says consultant Lars Sudmann. Being a leader is a little like being a parent; beforehand, we have all these rosy visions of how we're going to do it, how incredible we're going to be, and how we'll sidestep the mistakes that we see other people make. But when it's our turn to assume the role, we find that reality doesn't match our expectations or imaginations. Sudmann, for example, believed that he would ace his first leadership role. Then, he held his first major staff meeting, an employee asked a question about the company's email signature, and the proceedings — and his command of them — completely fell apart.

After some months, Sudmann realized he was fighting against certain entrenched factors that keep all leaders from improving. Like many in the working-world, leaders have too much to do and not enough time to do it; they don't clearly think through their priorities and strategies; and being in a position of power causes them to assume that the people beneath them will take care of a lot of problems.

Sudmann found a potential solution to these "classic leadership problems" in Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher. Rather than spending his time trying to learn to rally and guide others, Marcus Aurelius focused a surprising amount of his energy on mastering self-leadership. Sudmann has found this orientation tremendously helpful. Below he breaks down three actions that go into self-leadership.

First of all, you need to be aware of your shortcomings; leaders need to know all of their biases, predilections and weaknesses. Another idea is to take 5-10 minutes every day to think about the challenges you've recently handled and the ones you'll soon face. While Marcus Aurelius was fond of reflecting in the evening, Sudmann likes doing this over morning coffee. Questions to pose include: "How did my leadership go yesterday? How would the leader I'd like to be have faced the challenges I faced? What about my challenges today? What could I do differently?" Write down your thoughts so you can refer back to them and learn from them.

Also, regulate your feelings; no matter how much preparation and reflection you put in, there will be employees, colleagues, clients and associates who anger, frustrate or annoy you. That's where the practice of "reframing" comes in; stopping and asking yourself ... on a scale from 1 to 10, how important is this issue right now? Then, give yourself a moment to think: "How would the leader I aspire to be handle this situation?" The answer will come to you.

Lecturer's signature: 

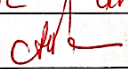
Date: 09.12.2019

Ex.2

Re-read the text 'To be a great leader, you need to start by leading yourself' on the previous page. Summarise main ideas from the text in your own words. Write about 175 words.

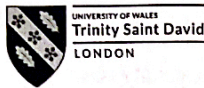
~~Managing~~  
Managing yourself helps you in developing a healthy leader. Being a manager involves good leadership skills, management time management and communication. Judmann realized they are vital for being a group leader. It's very stressful and contain tension. Without good organizational skills you can fail to be a leader.

Lecturer's comments: Good ideas but you should have written more. Not all main ideas have been mentioned (eg. about Marcus Aurelius leadership skills). There are some language errors.

Lecturer's signature: 

Date: 09.12.2019

## APPENDIX 2



### Academic and Employability Skills – BMSW4001

Term 1

#### In-class exercise 1: Paraphrasing (Oct 2019)

Student Name: Amamaria Roca Student ID: 1910022

Time allocated: 1 hour. Please return your paper to the lecturer upon completion. It will be returned to you at the next session. You will need to include a scanned copy of this exercise in the form of an appendix together with you Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

#### Ex.1 Write a paraphrase of the following passage.

Chocolate has always been considered an affordable little luxury, associated with romance and celebrations. Therefore in 2001, revelations that the production of cocoa in Ivory Coast involved child slave labour deeply shocked chocolate companies, consumers and governments alike. The USA passed legislation mandating that standards be created to permit companies who could prove that their chocolate was produced without forced labour to label their chocolate "slave-labour free." The chocolate industry agreed to an international protocol that would give chocolate producers four years to limit abusive practices.

In 2001, cocoa industry from Ivory Coast had a period of crisis. They included innocent children to work for them. However, the US government was motivated, it took actions. After decades when chocolate was considered an extravagance, at the beginning of the 21st century, the state takes measures against slavery.

Lecturer's comments: The meaning of the paraphrased text is not the same as the one in the original text.

Lecturer's signature: afk

Date: 11/11/2019

G4

Ex.2. Complete the blanks in such a way that the meaning of the second sentence is as close to the original sentence as possible, using the word in brackets where given. Pay attention to grammar and make sure what you write matches what is already given.

- 1) There will be a few changes around in the office. (announce)  
The boss announces about the changes in the office. X
- 2) He doesn't write to me as frequently as I wanted.  
I wish he will write more often. X
- 3) We were concerned about her health.  
We had some attention about her health. X
- 4) You weren't careful, so you made so many mistakes. (had)  
If you were had more careful you would not have so many mistakes. X
- 5) The council cut funding so we could not provide free parking.  
Because of the council stopped the funding we could not offer free parking. X
- 6) His proposal was a failure as it was too theoretical. (relied)  
His proposal has relied on theory information. X
- 7) It was Mary who stole money.  
He accused her of stealing money. X
- 8) He seems well-educated. However, he's not very bright. (although)  
He seems well-educated although he's not very bright. ✓
- 9) Universities place the burden of understanding plagiarism and attribution conventions on students.  
The responsibility for plagiarism in the opinion of the University is the students. X
- 10) 33% of adolescents who have one baby, have a second baby within two years of the first baby's birth. (third)  
33% of adolescent had the second child after three years from the birth of the first. X

Lecturer's comments: It seems that you do not always understand the meaning of the first sentence. You need to improve your paraphrasing skill & grammar.

Lecturer's signature: afk Date: 11/11/2019

APPENDIX 3

Amamaria Ricea - 19/0032 (Group 7)

Dear Mr. Daniels,

Address \_\_\_\_\_

P/c- \_\_\_\_\_

~~I am applying for~~

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
would

<sup>advertised in</sup> <sup>and I attach/enclose my C.V.</sup> <sup>like to</sup> <sup>have</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>apply for the</sup> <sup>coffee shop manager.</sup>  
My name is Amamaria Ricea, and I will  
I had for years experience in management  
and team-leadership. I am also a student at  
University of Wales and I have participated  
in many extracultural activities. These  
experiences have <sup>given me</sup> excellent communication  
skills, leadership and teamworking skills and  
given me intuition and strong analytical  
skills.

I have strong time-management skills  
and digital skills and I have much experience  
in organizing people and organizing money.

<sup>reply</sup> I look forward to a favorable  
reply. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

~~(Sincerely yours)~~ Yours sincerely,

Amamaria Ricea,

Good, but you should have shown how  
your skills match those required by  
the job description