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Academic And Employability Skills

ACE Practical Portfolio BMSW4001 – Task 2

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This year, in June 2021, I became a student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, the course I'm attending is Certificate of Higher Education in Skills for the Workplace. During the first term of the year one of the subjects that I've been studying with my group is called Academic and Employability Skills. The topics that my course group studied during the lectures are Time management/Organising study, Academic Writing, Paraphrasing, Summarising, Referencing, Reflection, CV writing, Cover letter writing, Public speaking and giving presentation and Online Learning Experience. In this assessment I'll discuss four of these topics, the ones that I considered more important for me, their impact on me and on my professional and academic progression. The four topics I chose to discuss in this reflection are Time Management/Organising study, CV writing, Cover letter writing and Public speaking and the type of reflection that I chose to use this time is Gibbs' Reflective Cycle which with its six stages (Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion and Action Plan) is one of the most popular and used way of reflection in academic writing due to its efficiency in analysing experiences.

Time managing: time managing is a very important set of skills that one individual needs to achieve and train in order to maintain a constantly growing career and become successful, a fundamental skill we can say. Organising the tasks of our schedule helps us work better and also helps us to avoid wasting time that instead of being productive would result in lost time. It also helps the individual to maintain a healthy lifestyle which in time increases the productivity and improves the efficacy and the quality of the work that gets done by an individual. Some of the most important time managing skills are:

- 1) Organisation: organising properly the tasks and the resources that one has to do and use can help staying focused properly on every task. Being organised means keeping a constantly updated agenda in a tidy, clear and easy to understand way. It also consists in keeping the resources and materials to use ordered and quick to access in order to increase the efficacy and avoid useless wasting of precious time. Maintaining a clean and tidy environment also helps with staying organised and focused.
- 2) Prioritise: having a good prioritising ability of the tasks is very important in order to manage time well. The way we prioritise tasks depends on the criteria we decide to base our selection on and every single person has a different way of prioritising that they prefer. For example some people will prioritise their tasks based on the predicted time that a task requires in order to get completed other people will prioritise the tasks that appear to be more urgent than others etc.
- 3) Set goals: being able to set goals is a very important time management skill. Knowing what is the goal to achieve influences our way of prioritising the tasks,

their importance, urgency and order in which we will get them scheduled in our agenda.

- 4) Communication: communication skills are tightly linked to time management skills and team working skills. Having good communication skills means we can make plans and set goals in our work team. This means that every single individual in our work team understands precisely the tasks that need to be done, with which priority and how to do so in order to avoid the team wasting time and resources caused by possible misunderstanding and bad or lack of good communication.
- 5) Stress management: taking care of our own mental health conditions is very important especially in the society we live in. Managing stress in a good way helps to keep the team motivated and focused on the tasks.
- 6) Environment management: the way we manage the work environment / study place is very important. A clean, tidy and peaceful environment improves the way we work, increases productivity and makes the working or studying environment pleasing.

CV writing: CV or Curriculum Vitae derives from the Latin language and it literally translates as "course of life". It is a resume, a brief description and summary of an individual's qualifications and acquired academic and professional experiences during their career as well as their key skills. Depending on the role one is trying to apply to, the curriculum vitae may get other sections added such as achievements and hobbies related to that role. It is mostly used by professionals that are applying for jobs as a tool

to get the attention of employers that without a CV wouldn't even consider them as candidates for the role.

Writing a good CV consists in a few very simple but important steps:

1. Include the personal contact details: name and surname, mobile phone number, address of email and the post address or only the town or city for basic reference. A candidate can also include the link to an online professional profile so the employer can consider them along with the curriculum vitae.
2. List the academic history: make a chronological list from the most recent to the least recent of the certificates already obtained. This list can include master's degree, postgraduate programme, undergraduate programme and secondary school certificates. Graduation year must be specified or in case of courses taking place in the present time the anticipated date of the graduation must be specified.
3. Detail the professional experience: make a chronological list from the most recent to the least recent of the professional experiences acquired. The organisation or the company must be listed, job title or role and dates of starting employment and ending employment as well as the reason for leaving must be specified. Key duties covered while in the role may be added too.
4. Add relevant skills and qualifications: reading the job description when applying for one is very important. It is strongly recommended to read more times the description of the job highlighting the most important skills that the employers require from the person applying for the role.

5. Include list of achievements and awards: in this section the candidate should focus on specifying the professional achievements more relevant in the field of the role they are applying for.
6. List relevant publications and presentations: the candidate must list articles, newspapers, publications, books and papers they took part to and that are relevant for the role. For publications the author, the book, the volume and the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) number must be specified. For presentations the date, location where it took place and title of the presentation must be specified.
7. Include professional associations and affiliations: if one individual covers a role within another organisation its name, dates of membership and geographic location must be specified as well.
8. Add hobbies and interests: At the end of the CV the candidate can consider adding some of their hobbies and interests that are related to the field the role they are applying to.
9. Review and modify: the last step to do when creating a curriculum vitae is to review the CV, check for errors of spelling (use of softwares for typos and grammatical errors is strongly recommended) or punctuation, inaccuracy of the information included. Advices and help from a colleague or a mentor more experienced in the field are a very good contribution.

Cover letter writing:

What is a cover letter:

A cover letter is a document that one candidate can write and attach to their CV when applying for a job in order to support their curriculum vitae and application even further. Unlike the curriculum vitae that acts like a describing list, a cover letter is a written document in which the candidates introduces themselves and try to convince the employer that they are the most suitable candidate for the role by highlighting the most appropriate skills and qualifications and bringing arguments to support them.

How to write a cover letter:

In order to write a proper cover letter to attach to the CV, the candidates must know who is the person that will read it, some details and story of the organisation, some news regarding the company, their position on the market and possible competitors and what are the goals that the organisation aims to achieve.

The letter can be formed by a few sections:

1. First section: in this first paragraph the candidates must specify their intentions, the reason they are writing the letter in the first place. They must say which position they are applying to, where have they found the job vacancy advertising and when they could be available to start their employment.
2. Second section: in this second paragraph the candidates should talk about themselves. Talk about their relevant experience and skills and bring argument that support the fact that their skills are the most suitable for the role and for the company.

3. Third section: in this third paragraph the candidates must explain why they are applying for the role, what attracted them to apply for the job, why did they choose that company, etc showing this way that they know something about the organisation they want to work for.
4. Fourth section: this fourth paragraph should be the conclusion to the letter that the candidates have written. Any unavailable dates for a job interview should be specified at this point of the cover letter.

Public speaking: The action of live talking in front of an audience is called "Public speaking" and it's very used in both academic and professional occasions. Tools used during public presentations include presentation slides, pre-recorded videos and any other kind of material that can be used with the intention of communicating or supporting a message or an idea. Public speaking is not a new or recent concept, experts believe that the concept of public speaking was born not long after the oral communication between individuals has been invented. Ancient Romans and Greeks are well known for public speaking, it was actually very common for them, one individual trying to communicate something to a crowd was a very common practice for them.

These four topics are just a part of the topics that our lecturer and mentor has introduced to my group this first term of the year. At the beginning it can't be denied, I felt insecure, a bit confused and not very confident as none of the topics chosen by me is easy and at the same time all of the topics chosen by me are very important as they

teach fundamental skills that every individual should learn. Thanks to the professionalism of my lecturer and the support of my colleagues I overcame all the negative feelings, turning them in a very short period into positive feelings and overall the study of these topics has become easy and even entertaining at times.

As the time was passing, the topics would start to link to each other in my mind, making this way everything become more and more clear with every lesson. Our lectures became helpful for me, the group and individual activities making them more enjoyable, mixing this way the socialization with the professors and colleagues with the learning.

In my opinion the beginning of everything is the hardest part, even the study of a model. That endless moment before the ice gets broken. In fact the constant devotion of our lecturers and their efforts to get us to learn was the key to our success during this first term. The fact that everyone became familiar with everyone has also helped much. At the beginning of the academic year everyone was a stranger to everyone. In time we became united, our group became strong and the help of our colleagues has been a massive support.

During this term I have learnt more than the topics. This first term taught me what teamwork is, how good communication skills make a team to be the winner and how a winning team can help a person in their individual progression. The individual makes the team become stronger and the team makes the individual become stronger.

I feel full of hope when I look at the future and I'm really looking forward to the next term when I plan to apply everything that I learned in this first term and I aim to improve my skills further more.

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